# PRIVATE EYE

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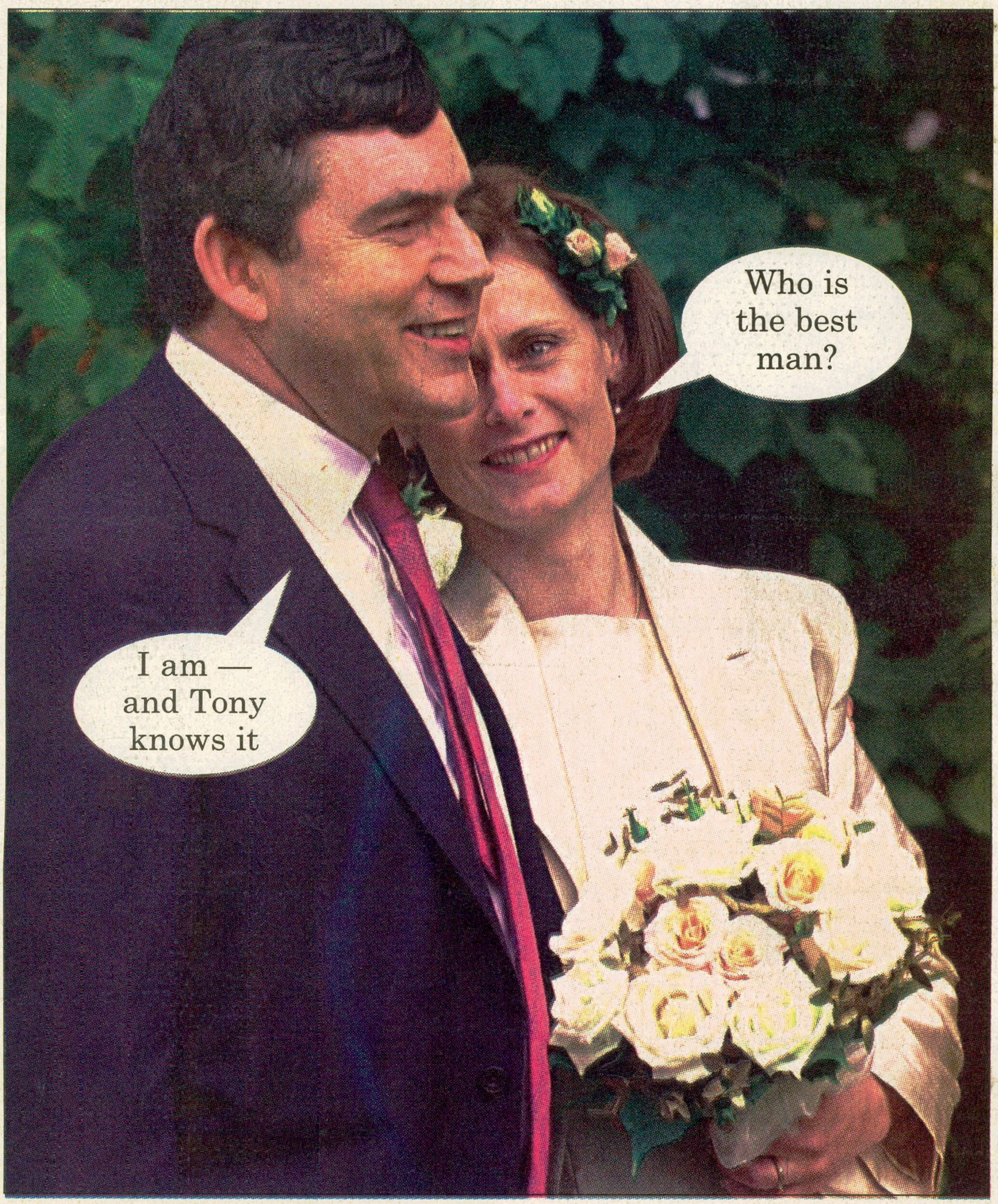

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# choice

## is your bank account giving you this?

TM

# New research shows Barclays jeopardise 7000 jobs at Luton Airport...

"AND I REPEAT THAT WE HAVE NO DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DAY TO DAY RUNNING OF LUTON AIRPORT..."

# ...and they pretend it's nothing to do with them

Despite what they try and say, Barclays really do pull the strings at Luton Airport. And they're also threatening up to 7,000 jobs and a quarter of a billion pounds worth of local spending in the Beds, Bucks and Herts area if the Bank proceeds with its plan to increase easyJet landing fees by 300%, or £5 per passenger.

easyJet has made it clear it will not accept the Barclays proposals and will not expand further at Luton until a new deal can be agreed. All future growth by the airline would go to other airports – probably in mainland Europe.

The effect on the local economy would be dramatic. New independent research* shows that up to 7,000 jobs and over £250 million of spending in the local economy are at risk.

This would also mean an end to the easyJet expansion of low-cost air routes from London. So sorry – no Paris, no Dublin, no Munich, no Rome and plenty of others. And what do Barclays say? They're still pretending (against all the evidence) that they have no direct involvement in the running of the airport.

**We are saying NO to a 300% increase in landing fees – you can do the same.**

**Read the research for yourselves at easyJet.com. And register your support and stop Barclays jeopardising jobs, local investment and low-cost air travel.**

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the web's favourite airline

*Conducted by National Economic Research Associates (June 2000).

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# Gnome

I AM delighted to announce that my Japanese-owned subsidiary, Gnomura, has been successful in acquiring the Millennium Dome against stiff competition. After lengthy negotiations Gnomura emerged as the only company willing to pay the 15p asking price.

The Dome offers a unique opportunity for us to create a superb Heritage Development Site celebrating all the best in modern and traditional Britian.

## WHAT YOU WILL SEE

***Phase One***

Supermarket Area – the biggest in Europe, open 24 hours a day.

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Er... that's it.

E. Strobes
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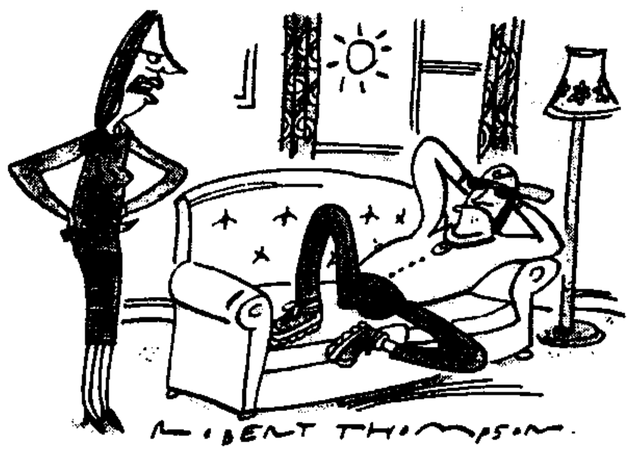

*"It's the summer holidays – why don't you join a religious cult like other boys?"*


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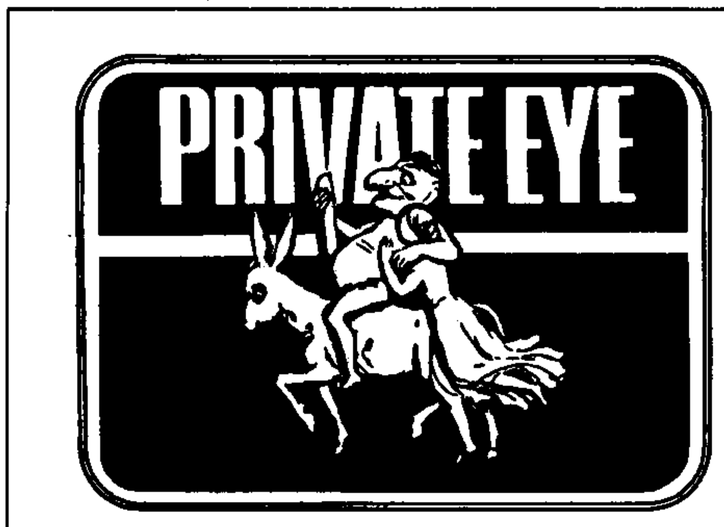
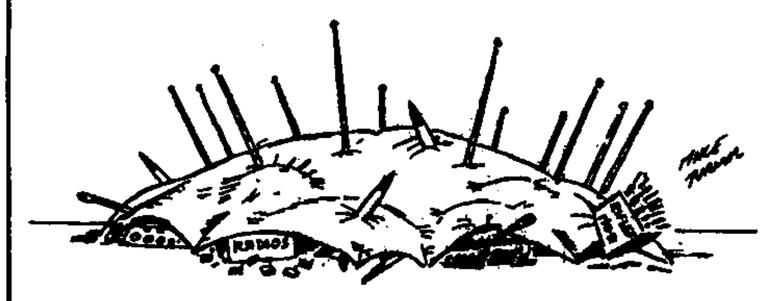



**101 Uses For A Dome**



Storage for Malfunctioning Army Equipment

**TONY BLAIR set off for the Tuscan sun with the idea of calling a snap general election in October still on his mind.**

Although May 2001 is the officially favoured date, the Rev Blair's plans have been thrown into disarray by Labour's dip in the opinion polls. An October election, it is thought, would have the advantage of capitalising on Gordon Brown's recent £43bn spending spree and catch the other parties off-guard.

The PM's private office has already made contact with Buckingham Palace, checking on the Queen's plans for the summer and alerting her private secretary, Sir Robin Janvrin, to the possibility that Brenda may need to return early from Balmoral to dissolve parliament.

**TERRIFIC news for paedophiles! Shambolic "outsourcing" contractor Capita has been named as the "preferred bidder" for a £400m, 10-year contract to help look after Britain's criminal records.**

The new criminal records bureau (CRB) is being set up by the home office to improve access to criminal records checks for employers, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from sex offenders and abusers. Crapita will develop IT systems and operate the whole process from receiving applications to issuing certificates.

If Crapita's stewardship of Britain's criminal records is as efficient as its handling of council tax and housing benefit (HB) claims in the London borough of Lambeth, the nation's sex offenders and other criminals can breathe a sigh of relief.

Crapita admits that at one stage 400 HB files were missing and around 200 are still lost in Olive Morris House, where its Lambeth operations are based. The backlog of housing benefit "items" in Lambeth – ie unanswered letters and unprocessed claims – reached a staggering 55,000 in April, and still stands at around 20,000.

Ironically Lambeth is desperately awaiting the establishment of the CRB because, as revealed in *Eye* 1007, the local authority is still unable to say if 2,000 staff, working directly with children without supervision, have been police-checked.

PS: Crapita has just announced sales up 38 percent to £208m and pre-tax profits up 30 percent to £18.4m. "We are in a golden period right now," says chief executive Paul Pindar. Who for?

**ANOTHER triumph for the *Eye*'s favourite engineering firm, Balfour Beatty, whose consortium is favourite to get the contract to run the part-privatised London tube network.**

BB men working on Birmingham's new Bull Ring project cut through a water main last week, causing a flood at the adjacent New Street station which shorted 25,000 volt overhead cables and led to the cancellation of 425 trains, causing transport chaos in the Midlands and beyond which took three days to put right.

Announcing BB'S inclusion on the tube shortlist last year, London Underground said that safety was of "paramount importance".

**SO. FAREWELL then the National Centre For Popular Music, which as predicted in *Eye* 1000 has closed for 10 months before reopening – maybe – after a "change of focus".**

A further £270,000 has been squeezed out of the Arts Council, and future attendance figures are now estimated at 110,000 a year – which is neat, because that's what Sheffield's answer to the dome has so far managed to achieve, rather than the 400,000 originally predicted, which no one now mentions.

Sheffield's new Lib Dem council, not wanting to be seen as "lacking in civic pride", has meekly agreed, despite previous assurances to the contrary, to help with the bail-out from civic funds. Many of the staff will lose their jobs but, as always in these affairs, the top managers who made the decisions that have resulted in the present calamity will be retained to oversee the "new, improved" model.

No doubt the Japanese are waiting in the wings to buy the whole thing at a knockdown price and will rename it Dome 2...

**PERHAPS Stagecoach boss Brian Souter should be concentrating on standards in his bus monopoly rather than in Scottish classrooms.**

Stagecoach's East Midlands subsidiary has been humiliated at an inquiry at Mansfield magistrates' court. A government vehicle inspector David Rose had been on an unannounced visit to Stagecoach's Mansfield depot, and issued 22 prohibition notices against defective buses there. The buses were immediately taken off the road and Stagecoach East Midlands could only keep its service going by calling up relief buses from all over the country.

At the court last month Mr Rose said Stagecoach "knowingly operated defective vehicles which could have put the public at risk". Traffic commissioner Tom Macartney said: "Prohibition notices on the sheer scale of this are almost unprecedented. It is a disgrace to have this number. I should make it clear I came very close to revoking the company's licence."

**TO PROVE his interest in "compassionate conservatism", US presidential hopeful governor George W. Bush has chosen Dick Cheney, his father's former defence secretary, as his vice-presidential running mate.**

Cheney impressed delegates to the Republican convention with his sober pitch for compassionate conservatism. Luckily no one mentioned Burma, least of all Cheney himself, who is chief executive of Halliburton, a Brown and Root subsidiary which makes millions servicing oil firms in that country.

Burma's version of compassionate conservatism is of course a mixture of ruthless military government, terrorist police state, imprisoned opposition and widespread forced child labour.

# Street Of Shame

**A DEATHLY hush fell over newsrooms as Fleet Street's finest began to comprehend the full horror of the French air disaster. Hardened news editors wept openly as they studied the reports from Paris. *Not a single celebrity was on the plane. And no Brits either.***

It seemed almost inconceivable that a Concorde wouldn't have at least one minor royal on board, plus a smattering of supermodels or ageing crooners. But no: just a hundred-odd package tourists of whom nobody had ever heard. Worse still, German tourists.

Deprived of the obvious angle, the papers had to fill their front pages with a photo of the burning plane – which was the subject of a fierce bidding war between the *Daily Mail* and the *Mirror*. Although the *Mirror* won the auction for "exclusive" rights, the *Mail* used it anyway, much to the fury of Piers Moron.

Five days later the tabloids at last got a consolation prize as a Concorde carrying singers Tony Bennett and George Benson was forced to make an unscheduled landing at Newfoundland. ("Stars Caught in Concorde 'Fuel' Scare.") But it was too little, too late, especially as neither of the stars had been killed or even slightly inconvenienced. Besides, by then the tabloids had turned their attention to a far more important event – the first public disrobing of Ms Jerry Hall.

**AS SOON as news of the Paris air crash came through, Fleet Street newsdesks were booking hacks on to the first BA Concorde flight to New York to write colour pieces about the jet's passengers bravely, er, carrying on as normal.**

At the cash-strapped *Express*, however, Lord Hollick's bean counters were reluctant to issue an authorisation for reporter David Smith to travel on Concorde. "Why," the accountants demanded, "can't he go to New York on a cheaper flight?"

Fortunately *Express* deputy editor Chris Blackhurst overruled the suits and Smith was able to file his heroic account of flight BA 001: "Such must have been the awe of 100 passengers aboard doomed flight AF4590. They, too, were living out their dream..." etc, etc. Worth every penny!

**YET another monsoon of paperwork is about to descend on the poor bedraggled NHS. But for once the culprit is not health secretary Alan Milburn.**

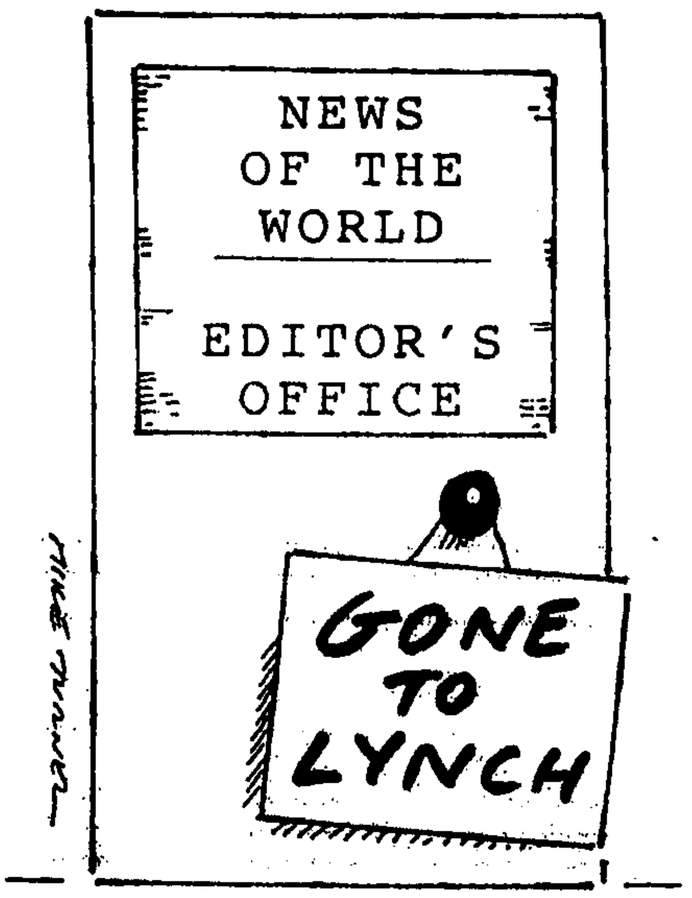
This latest exercise is intended to make buckets of money for a new arrival on the health scene – a company called "Dr Foster", which (according to its publicity blurb) "generates revenues by selling editorial content, advertising and health related products".

The operation hinges on a nationwide survey of Britain's hospitals. A bulky questionnaire – more than 200 questions, many multi-part – urges them to bare all on subjects as diverse as car-parking charges and details of clinical work. The questions have been compiled with the help of Alan Maynard, professor of health economics at York University.

So who is "Dr Foster"? The firm's stethoscope wielders-in-chief are Tim Kelsey, until recently news editor of the *Sunday Times*; Roger Taylor, late of the *FT*; and Mark Gould, former associate editor of the GPs' weekly *Pulse*.

By a happy coincidence on 30 July the *Independent on Sunday* ran a front-page news story rubbishing the NHS's own information systems, backed up by several quotes which must have gladdened the heart of Kelsey and his colleagues. "If you don't have quality data," an academic told the paper, "you really don't have the basis to make meaningful decisions. The NHS information technology system is a mess."

The story – which can only aid Dr Foster's rival data service – was written by, er, Mark Gould. And the helpful quotes came from, er, Professor Alan Maynard.




**IT WAS hard for harassed *Sunday Times* hacks to find anyone at all who would speak out against the government's proposals to spend much more money on the health service. But then political editor Michael Prescott struck lucky.**

On 30 July he devoted two columns and six paragraphs to the views and quotes of one Roy Lilley, described as a "former NHS Trust chairman and visiting fellow at Imperial College". So much space was given to Mr Lilley there was no room to remind readers of his historic definition, while chairman of the Homewood NHS trust in Surrey in 1994, of the order of doctors' duties. Their first duty was to the organisation for which they worked; their next was to themselves. Patients came a bad third.

Nor was there room for a word about Mr Lilley's subsequent censure from the then health minister, Virginia Bottomley; nor his swift departure from the Homewood Trust; nor his tempestuous relations with his fellow Tory councillors at Surrey Heath; nor the sensational disclosures in the late-lamented *Today* newspaper about his departure from the board of a paint firm shortly before it went bust.

None of these matters was half as relevant as the fact that Roy Lilley wanted to attack the government and so did the *Sunday Times*.

**JASON FRASER, the self-styled non-paparazzo, points out that the *Eye* failed to record last issue his triumph over the *Express* newspaper. The *Express* had to make a grovelling apology for suggesting that Fraser was being probed over the harassment of Diana and Dodi Fayed and pay up thousands of pounds to charity.**

The original piece seemed to be, er... heavily influenced by the Fayed world view (ie, the paparazzi are the guilty ones and not the people who employ drunken drivers) which has led to speculation that editor Rosie Boycott is being rather over-generous to the Fugger. One wonders why?

Meanwhile, the touchy Fraser is still furious with *Private Eye* for printing his picture last week – *without permission!!* Despite having just spent a lucrative fortnight flogging endless snatched long lens photos of celebs on holiday – Robbie and Geri and Andy and Rod and Penny and Catherine and Elle and Madonna and Sinead and etc, etc. Fraser thinks the *Eye*'s conduct is unethical.

**ANOTHER great front page scoop for *Daily Telegraph* political hackette Rachel Sylvester, who seems to have a direct line to Number Ten.**

At the end of July she revealed how Tony Blair and foreign secretary Robin Cook were "drawing up plans for a European 'senate' made up of national politicians including British MPs". As she told readers, this was a brave British initiative and implied that it would be a mechanism for keeping the Europeans in check.

*Telegraph* editor Charles Moore must have been delighted that, yet again, Sylvester's Downing Street contacts had given her an exclusive. The eurosceptic Moore would be less pleased to find out that the story was in fact old hat and the senate plan had actually been launched by German foreign minister Joschka Fischer three months ago as part of the ongoing European project.

**THE *Sun*, keen to do its master's bidding, has tried to help keep the Dirty Digger's theme park, Fox Studios Australia, from going the same way as its star attraction, the Titanic.**

A three-page "travel special" on 29 July told prospective pommie vistors that "one major new attraction is Fox Studios Australia. Here you can be a film extra aboard Titanic as she smashes into the iceberg, learn about animation with The Simpsons Down Under, find out how TV is made, discover the secrets of movie make-up or trot round the set of *Babe: Pig In The City*".

Meanwhile the non-Murdoch media in Oz have revealed that in fact the cheesy movie theme park is heading for its own iceberg.

On 14 July Lend Lease, a property company that has matched the Digger's own stake in the studios, quietly announced that it had made provision for losses of US $80m at Fox Studios Australia. News International is keeping quiet, but presuming its own share is similar, the studios would appear to be a nine-figure sum in the red.

**Top surgeon is to head new body in medical ethics**

*Evening Standard*

**SO. FAREWELL then, the *Times* Diary – soon to be axed for being completely useless (see *Eyes passim ad nauseam*). Actually it wasn't all that bad, wrote the *Telegraph*'s former Peterbore editor Quentin Letts in the *Evening Standard*: "Only last week, for instance, it broke a good 'un about St Paul's Cathedral charging the Queen Mother £15,000 for her recent birthday celebration service. The story was widely followed..."**

That story was in fact not a good 'un but, like most *Times* Diary items, a dud 'un.

The half-baked tale came about after a hack rang St Paul's and was put through to Ken Stones, the financial controller. During the course of the conversation Stones mentioned that the cathedral had lost about 80 percent of its tourist income on the day of the service – amounting to about £15,000. Assuming St Paul's were miffed about this loss of revenue, the Diary hacks put together their story.

In fact, there was no bill to the Queen Mum – nor was one considered. St Paul's budgets for a certain number of "closed" days per year when the cathedral is out of bounds to tourists because of major events. It never charges for hosting a national service, anyway. And in any case, the "lost" revenue was more than compensated for by broadcasting fees...

Oh well, better luck next time... except there isn't going to be one!

## BIRTSPEAK

**THE British army has started communicating in fluent Birtspeak judging by the following excerpts from the *Defence Intelligence and Security Centre Corporate Plan 2000-2005*, chief executive: Brigadier C.G. Holtom**

"The DISC has laid strong foundations for effective intelligence and security training. Now our effort is directed at change management. Our own structure will evolve to a much more centralised form for the delivery of common services. Our training will become progressively modular and generic. This is essential if we are to respond to changing Statements of Training Requirement driven by operational experience...

"Over the first three years of this plan the DISC will reorganise on functional lines into a flatter more dynamic structure, which will then be reviewed every two years...

"The DISC has been asked to provide training environments for JOCS, UKINCA, MIDB, GP3 and IT for the DIS. The DISC will approach these requirements in terms of an integrated solution...

"We lack a communications environment within which to teach and promote intelligence architecture construction, collection management and split based operations..." Etc, etc.

**THE *New Statesman* recently contained a cheery encomium to the new, 39-year-old leader of the Spanish Socialist party (PSOE), Jose Zapatero.**

The article, which favourably compared the modernising lawyer to Britain's own modernising lawyer, prime minister Tony Blair, was signed by David Mathieson, who cryptically informed readers that the "author is a member of new Labour and the PSOE".

But what is the real identity of the jobbing hack with a foot in both Britain and Spain? Step forward, David Mathieson, special adviser to foreign secretary Robin Cook, and as such surely strictly above writing partisan pieces for even more partisan journals.

**WHAT news of Sir Richard Branson? Beardie hopes to drown the recent bad publicity with a torrent of sycophantic gush – which is why he has suddenly started inviting profile-writers up to his Oxfordshire house. His techniques are comically shameless.**

"I find it difficult to think hard about something and look someone in the eye," he confessed shyly to Christa D'Souza of the *Daily Telegraph* magazine. "It's, um, quite distracting, especially if it's a beautiful face... Gosh, I've been looking down all this time and I've suddenly noticed you've got lovely eyes."

Duly charmed, D'Souza wrote a long feature portraying Branson as the perfect Mr Clean. "The only vice he has ever been guilty of is smoking – a habit which he kicked three years ago," she drooled. As for drink, he scarcely touches the stuff. Even at his annual cricket match, where all the other guests were squiffy, "Branson's drink, I notice, is untouched."

Also present at the cricket match was Adam Higginbotham from the *Sindie* magazine. Rather than praise his lovely eyes, Branson decided to give the hack his laddish male-bonding treatment instead – cadging cigarettes (which the pair of them smoked furtively behind the bushes), swilling countless cans of beer and glasses of wine.

Then came the final intimate consummation. Late in the evening, when they were "both too drunk to conduct a coherent interview", the *Sindie* man asked a final question: what was the last dream you had? "I've got the most embarrassing dream and I'm not going to tell you about it," Branson replied. "I've never told the press, so I'm not going to tell you."

Oh, go on, Higginbotham pleaded, sensing a scoop.

"Well, I was talking to my friend Simon Draper... I said to him, this is a dream that I can only ever tell you and nobody else about. It would be awful to ever read about it. I'm not sure I should tell anyone..." And so on, until at last (having cadged yet another cigarette) Branson relented. In the dream, he owns a house somewhere in the world but "I can't remember where the fuck it is". Understandably proud of discovering Beardie's best-kept secret, Higginbotham ended his article with this dramatic flourish.

He might have been rather less pleased had he looked up a profile of Branson from the London *Evening Standard* of 10 January 1996, which ended like this: "Did he ever have bad dreams? Branson thought for a moment before replying: 'I do have one awful, recurring dream. That I will forget one of my houses'."

# HACKWATCH

## Alpha Mail

**THERE are few royal stories more perennially titillating than Prince Andrew's love life — and few newspapers better equipped to ferret out the truth than the *Daily Mail*, which employs such noted "royal experts" as Richard Kay, Ross Benson and Nigel Dempster. But even the most loyal *Mail* readers may sometimes wonder if there hasn't been shome mishtake...**

**2 June 1998:** Will flame-haired PR girl Aurelia Cecil be the next Duchess of York? The *Mail* thinks so. "Friends say the romance between Aurelia and Prince Andrew is blossoming," it reveals. "With her old-money, old-school background, Aurelia is perfect bride material."

**26 September:** Top royal hack Richard Kay reports that flame-haired Aurelia Cecil is a "major passion" in Prince Andrew's life.

**14 October:** Nigel Dumpster, by contrast, believes that the romance between Aurelia and Andy has "cooled down".

**16 October:** The *Mail* reveals that South African model Heather Mann has been identified as "the new love in Prince Andrew's life". Though Heather plays down suggestions that she has been to his house at Sunninghill Park, "she confirmed that she had been to the royal retreat of Balmoral."

**29 October:** "Friends of the dour Duke of York find reports of his 'new' romance with South African former burger-bar waitress Heather Mann ludicrous," Nigel Dumpster reports.

**4 November:** Dumpster again rubbishes the story. "So much for the rumour mill that will have us believe the Duke of York is involved with former model Heather Mann," he sneers. "Her eldest sister, Claudia Davidson, 42, says from her home in Lonehill, Johannesburg: 'They are just friends... It has been blown completely out of proportion'."

**31 December:** For the benefit of latecomers, Dempster delivers yet another encore. "Reports of Andrew's new 'romance' with South African model Heather Mann," he declares, "are fantasy."

**4 January 1999:** Dumpster is infuriated by a report in the *Sunday Mirror* that Heather Mann has been dumped. "I'm afraid that there was never a romance to start with, and that former model Heather is on record as saying she has never been to Balmoral with Andrew, as fatuously claimed by the paper. Where did all this madness begin?" Er, in the *Daily Mail* of 16 October 1998, actually.

**26 July:** Reporting that Prince Andrew was "innocent of any impropriety" at a candlelit dinner with blonde American socialite Melissa Lincoln, the *Mail*'s royal hack Wayne Francis adds that the prince "has been linked with ex-model Heather Mann". This time, for some reason, Dumpster fails to rise to the bait.

**28 February 2000:** "On the golf course they are evenly matched. He plays off a six handicap and she a seven. But is there anything more to the relationship between the Duke of York and former drama student Audrey Raimbault?" The *Mail* thinks so. Friends tell the paper that their relationship is "quite intimate", and Audrey admits that she had lunch with Randy Andy at Buckingham Palace.

**3 April:** A tremendous scoop fills most of the *Mail*'s page three. "The Duke of York has forsaken his [golf] clubs in recent weeks after falling for public relations girl Emma Gibbs," royal reporter Wayne Francis reveals. "Friends say the Duke is besotted with Australian-born Emma." Until her royal suitor arrived on the scene, Emma "was often spotted out on the town with Christopher Leigh-Pemberton, a cousin of Lord Kingsdown". Her close friends include Andrew's "old flame" Aurelia Cecil.

**4 April:** Nigel Dumpster pours scorn on the story. Aurelia Cecil and Christopher Leigh-Pemberton "are telling friends they do not know Australian Emma Gibbs, purportedly the latest squeeze of the Duke of York," he claims. "Reports have Emma as a onetime girlfriend of Leigh-Pemberton, and also close to Aurelia." He omits to mention that these "reports" apeared in his own newspaper.

**22 April:** Another day, another girlfriend. Richard Kay reveals that Prince Andrew and Robert Maxwell's daughter Ghislaine held hands during a "romantic lunch" in New York. "What makes their conduct so fascinating," Kay adds, "is that in London, according to Andrew's circle, he has been seeing Ghislaine's friend, PR Emma Gibbs."

**8 July:** "Prince Andrew's Secret Girlfriend" is the headline above a two-page spread by top royal-watcher Ross Benson. All those stories about Andrew's alleged romances with Emma Gibbs, Audrey Raimbault or Ghislaine Maxwell are "wrong", he announces. The real woman in his life is beautiful, leggy Heather Mann, who has been "close" to the prince ever since her arrival from South Africa in 1998. "Heather is the girlfriend," one of Andrew's oldest friends assures Benson. Oh, and she has indeed been to Balmoral. Which may come as a surprise to readers who believed Nigel Pratt-Dumpster's furious denials.

**31 July:** Now it's Benson's turn to be surprised. "Who's the Blonde Helping Andrew to Have More Fun?" asks the *Mail*'s teasing front-page headline, alongisde a photo (copyright Jason Fraser, king paparazzo) showing the prince on a beach in St Tropez with a female "companion". Inside, below another picture of the pair, Richard Kay gives the answer. "Prince Andrew has a new girlfriend, I can reveal. Caroline Stanbury, who spent the weekend with him in the south of France..."

According to friends, Andrew is besotted with the 24-year-old PR girl: "He's madly in love — he can't believe how gorgeous she is." Another *Mail* headline describes her as the "girl about town who made Andrew say goodbye golf clubs" — just as, three months earlier, it described PR girl Emma Gibbs as "the blonde who made Andrew forget his golf".

**1 August:** *Mail* hackette Natalie Clarke pens a full-page profile of Caroline Stanbury. "She's very open about what she wants from life — what you see is what you get," a friend tells Clarke. "She loves being the centre of attention and will probably be lapping up all this speculation about her and Prince Andrew." (Can this chatty source by any chance be related to the "friend" of an earlier squeeze, Aurelia Cecil, who told the *Mail* back in January 1998 that "Aurelia's a go-getter... She was quietly thrilled to bits that the news has come out. She loves the attention"?) On the opposite page, however, Richard Kay seems curiously muted about his scoop.

"A friend, speaking on his [Andrew's] authority, described his relationship with Caroline as 'nothing more than friends'." More curiously still, Kay notes that Andrew has been in St Tropez with his ex-wife and his two daughters — and "when Fergie is on the beach even beauties like Caroline disappear over the horizon".

So was Caroline on the beach at all? A small paragraph tucked away at the foot of the page reveals the embarrassing answer: "A picture we carried with our report on Prince Andrew's holiday in St Tropez yesterday was wrongly identified as being of Caroline Stanbury, when in fact it was of Annabel Bond, who is not a close friend of the prince... We apologise to those concerned."

Never mind. The tale of Andy's infatuation with Caroline may yet come true — just so long as Nigel Dumpster can be persuaded to dismiss it as "fantasy".

## Number crunching

**£9.6 million**

TOTAL value of goods and services sold on Lastminute.com website in the three months to June

**£9.3 million**

LASTMINUTE.COM losses in the three months to June

## HOW THEY ARE RELATED

**ANNABEL HESELTINE recently used her invitation to write the *New Statesman* diary to mount a vehement defence of surgeons' rights.**

"The latest silly idea this government has come up with is to suggest that surgeons should no longer be allowed to earn some extra pennies from private practice," she expounds. And she should know. Though she omits to mention it, her new hubby Peter Butler is a dishy plastic surgeon.

**BETTY BOOTHROYD, now retired from the speaker's chair, will receive a simple life peerage when she resigns as MP for West Bromwich West in the autumn.**

Political gossip columnists have been filling empty August pages with speculation that Betty – the first woman speaker – will be given an hereditary title. Jasper Gerrard, waffling in the Atticus column in the *Sunday Times,* is typical in pointing out that Betty is heirless so such a move would be safe and follow the precedent set by George Thomas when he became Viscount Tonypandy in 1983. That title died with him in 1997.

What Gerrard & Co forget is that Thomas's title was bestowed when Thatcher was at her imperial worst and was on a mission to revive hereditary peerages. Remember the 1st Viscount Whitelaw? Or the earldom of Stockton created for Macmillan on his 90th birthday in 1984? Even Tony Blair isn't that daft. Er...

**GOVERNMENT ministers preparing to pack their bags for the three-month summer recess were alarmed to receive telephone calls from *Sunday Times* hacks demanding to know where they intended to take their holidays.**

Why the sudden interest? It couldn't be because *Sunday Times* hack Eben Black described Prescott's holiday destination as "unknown" on the same day as all the other Sunday papers revealed that he was going to Cyprus? This was particularly embarrassing, as Black should have guessed where Prescott would be, since it was the *Sunday Times* Insight Team who made all the fuss about Prescott and his Cypriot friends.

**RESEARCHERS at the Palace of Westminster feel so downtrodden that 22 of them have signed a mock early-day motion complaining at the miserable pay and conditions of MPs staff.**

While a number of MPs rely on a stream of American volunteers, others offer jobs to immediate family. Those MPs who do employ Britons, pay them and don't exploit them, have on occasions forked out increases from their own pockets. But the catalyst to this latest protest – which may yet see members of the Transport and General Workers' Union parliamentary group (the Commons staff branch) going on strike – was the plight of one MP and his researcher.

So determined but poverty-stricken was the former that he paid the latter in Benson and Hedges. "Being paid in fags is the last straw," says the staff spokesman. "It added fuel to the flames."

**THE precocious former Mandelson adviser turned lobbyist Derek Draper – who once bragged to *Observer* hacks posing as potential clients that he knew the "seventeen most important people in 'new' Labour because I am one of them" recently wrote an astonishing letter to the same newspaper.**

In it he congratulated Boris Johnson on his selection as the Conservative candidate for Henley, before going on to advertise the services of his latest venture – a marketing company going under the name "Farm". Except that the hapless Draper had meant the letter to be sent to Johnson at the *Spectator*. The boy blunderer has also surfaced elsewhere, penning a shameless article for the *Times*. Draper, whose proximity to the heady world of "new" Labour drove him first to the Priory clinic and then to discover new age crystal worship, now tells the *Thunderer* "the rest of us would like our party back". Pass the sick-bag.

*'Backbiter'*

**DOWN**
1 Savage (6)
2 Labour (4)
3 Spins (7)

*Daily Mail crossword clue*

## Number crunching

# £90

■ AMOUNT pensioners need per week to ensure they lead more than just a basic lifestyle, according to Select Committee

■ ONE square foot of John Prescott's carpet (£30), plus one yard of Lord Irvine's curtains (£60)

## ROAD RAGE

**NAÏVE observers of the spiralling cost of road projects are silly enough to imagine that when a road is finished, it stops costing money. They should take a close look at the 5.5kms of the M11 link road in east London.**

The budgeted cost of the road when it was started seven years ago was £153m. In 1998 the national audit office (NAO) found it had cost £340m. In September last year transport minister Lord Macdonald told Harry Cohen, Labour MP for Leyton and Wanstead, that the cost was £380m. Still, at least the road was built and being used, and that presumably was the end of the matter.

Not so. In a letter to Mr Cohen on 29 June, Peter Nutt, acting chief executive of the Highways Agency, discloses "the latest forecast" for the cost of the M11. It is now £430m, a jump of at least £50m since the road was built. How so? Mr Nutt explains that since Macdonald's forecast "there have been significant increases in the value of works claims (£16m), land acquisition and interest payments (£15m) statutory utilities costs (£2m) and related consultants' fees."

By far the largest part of those "related consultants' fees" goes to consulting engineers W.S. Atkins, who are automatically paid a percentage of total construction costs (*Eye* 948, 17 April 1998). The greater the payments to consultants, in other words, the more is reaped by W.S. Atkins, regardless of any actual work they might do. It follows that the longer the negotiations for back payments are drawn out, the greater the benefit to W.S. Atkins (and the cost to the taxpayer).

*"She fakes her organisms"*

## GREENWICH VERY MEANTIME

**NO ONE involved with the Greenwich tent can escape the curse of dome. Another victim of the great white elephant is the firm that supplied the metal parts for the Spiral of Innovation outside exhibit.**

Aluminium to Zirconium Ltd (A to Z) started to supply the parts to building contractors Pace Construction last October and continued to do so until the end of December when the project was completed. At first it received payment when it was due; but since 23 December when the bill was more than £17,000 it has taken a great deal of pressure from A to Z to extract the money in dribs and drabs. Pace Construction still owes it £3,700, and A to Z has instructed solicitors to start winding up proceedings against the company. The Design Council, which is responsible for this part of the project, has told A to Z there are no outstanding sums owed to Pace Construction, which has been paid more than £250,000 for its work on the dome. Why has Pace shown such sloth in paying A to Z a small fraction of the sum?

## BRITAIN IN EUROPE

**TONY BLAIR was delighted to learn last year that one of his favourite industrialists, the chairman of British Airways Lord Marshall, had agreed to chair a new cross party pro-single currency grouping to be called "Britain in Europe" (BIE).**

The fledgling organisation had a number of false starts but was soon able to count on the support of media magnate Lord Hollick, the general secretary of the AEEU engineering union Sir Ken Jackson, as well as former Conservative cabinet heavyweights Michael Heseltine and Ken Clarke.

Pro-euro captains of industry have dug deep, with British American Tobacco donating some £25,000 to BIE. With public opinion distinctly hostile towards the single currency, Lord Marshall was determined to hire a high profile, experienced director to front BIE. From the outset, however, it was clear that Peter Mandelson's preferred candidate, *Financial Times* journalist and "new" Labour insider Simon Buckby, would be given the job. But this was not before some £40,000 of BIE money was paid to head-hunters Charity Recruitment for a completely pointless search.

At the time of Buckby's appointment there was concern about his lack of campaigning experience and maturity – with good reason. On hearing of his appointment, via his mobile Buckby loudly informed all his friends that he had "doubled his money", ignoring the pained expressions of long-suffering *FT* secretaries who had been obliged to put up with his over-bearing behaviour.

One commitment Marshall sought from Buckby was that he would not seek selection as a Labour parliamentary candidate. The former Labour students' supremo had previously launched a campaign from his girlfriend's address (stressing his local roots of course and embellishing his campaigning record) for the rock solid Labour seat of Leeds Central after the sudden death of Derek Fatchett MP. He lost to Tony Benn's son, Hilary. Shortly afterwards, convinced that Betty Boothroyd would announce her intention to retire, Buckby rented a flat in what he thought was her West Bromwich constituency. Unfortunately it was just outside.

Given the impossibly long time Buckby had waited for Boothroyd's retirement announcement (er, not even a year), the director-to-be and his charabanc moved south again. Doubtless Buckby is kicking himself for such impatience, but a promise to Lord Marshall is a promise. And being in charge of the day to day running of Britain in Europe has its compensations. Buckby is believed to earn well in excess of £70,000 a year and commands an expense account.

Misery-stricken underlings at BIE are not impressed, particularly as he and his other half have flown off to Grenada for a well-earned summer break, just after Buckby called an impromptu staff meeting to announce he was "confiscating the kettle and toaster" because it "wasn't clean enough".

Staff meetings at BIE are getting smaller and smaller. Lord Sharman recently stood down as treasurer and is not the only senior peer to have jumped ship. Former Labour party fundraiser Paul Cottingham has escaped, as has another former Labour insider Matthew Laza.

Few organisations can boast trouble free staff relations, and many have imperious bosses who on occasions swing the lead. Yet much of the bile seeping from BIE would not matter if the pro single currency campaign had begun to turn the corner, and if the cash for Buckby's salary was rolling in. In fact with each BIE re-launch, public hostility to the single currency hits record levels. So BIE has made zero impact. More seriously, a recent board minute shows that BIE is running an annual deficit of some £120,000. When Buckby arrives back at Heathrow from the sunny Caribbean he would be advised to avoid James Callaghan's famous maxim: "Crisis, what crisis?"

## BRITAIN IN AMERICA

**RUSSIA, China and most of Europe bitterly oppose George W. Bush's support for a US nuclear missile defence system (NMD) – aka Son of Star Wars – which would rely on British bases such as Fylingdales on the North York moors. But that hasn't deterred the Republicans' old friend, Lady Thatcher.**

In a speech to the Hoover Institution in California last month, the former Iron Lady gushed over the US presidential hopeful. "Governor George W. Bush has spoken about the need for an effective ballistic missile defence which would also protect America's allies. I applaud his vision. The peace and security of the whole world depends on wise and courageous leadership from the White House."

The baroness claimed "the danger is already with us", and cited the Rumsfeld Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States. In 1998 it noted that countries like North Korea, Iran and Iraq "would be able to inflict major destruction on the US within about five years of a decision to acquire the capability".

But here Lady Thatch was guilty of false logic in assuming NMD was Rumsfeld's natural conclusion. Among the legions of American scientists who oppose NMD is the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), a 50,000-strong body which argues that it is virtually impossible to safeguard ballistic missile defences against attackers, rendering them practically useless. NMD would not only be a threat to international peace, they say, but a big waste of money too.

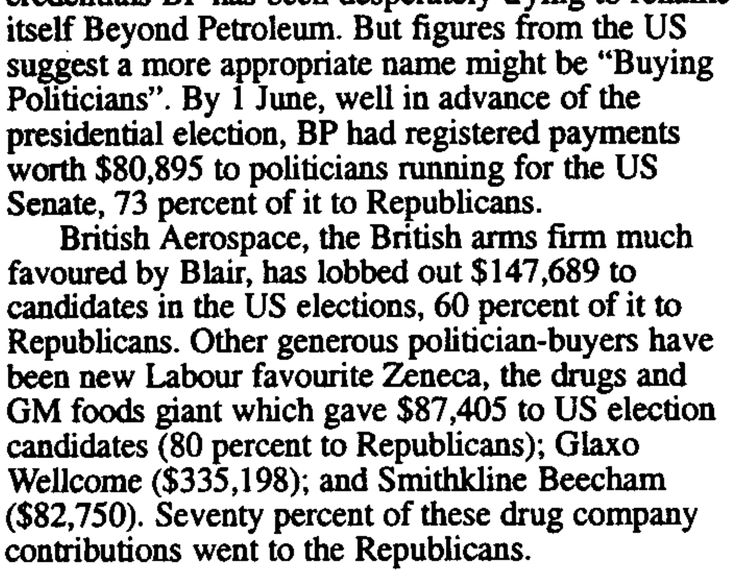
One UCS board member is Richard L. Garwin, a former IBM scientist who has served on the US president's scientific advisory committee, the defence science board, and most recently on... the Rumsfeld commission.

**WHILE Conservative leader William Hague makes an embarrassing visit to the Republican convention in the United States, the official wisdom in new Labour circles is that ministers here hope George W. Bush's lead in the polls will vanish and that their Democrat chums will be reelected to the presidency.**

Not all new Labour supporters seem to agree, however.

Take BP, whose former chairman Lord Simon was one of Tony Blair's first ministerial appointments. In an effort to establish its green credentials BP has been desperately trying to rename itself Beyond Petroleum. But figures from the US suggest a more appropriate name might be "Buying Politicians". By 1 June, well in advance of the presidential election, BP had registered payments worth $80,895 to politicians running for the US Senate, 73 percent of it to Republicans.

British Aerospace, the British arms firm much favoured by Blair, has lobbed out $147,689 to candidates in the US elections, 60 percent of it to Republicans. Other generous politician-buyers have been new Labour favourite Zeneca, the drugs and GM foods giant which gave $87,405 to US election candidates (80 percent to Republicans); Glaxo Wellcome ($335,198); and Smithkline Beecham ($82,750). Seventy percent of these drug company contributions went to the Republicans.




*"Be honest – does my bumf look big in this?"*

## NOOKS and CORNERS

**SIR John Soane, the architect's architect, may be deservedly fashionable at the moment (his eponymous museum has been restored, his Dulwich Picture Gallery enlarged; books (good ones) on him pour forth and the Royal Academy mounted a superb exhibition about him last year.) But it all makes no difference to Reading council, which is responsible for one of Soane's rare public monuments, the Simeon Monument.**

This highly original and characteristic work stands forlornly in Market Place. Soane was born near Reading and his friend, the banker Edward Simeon, was a founder of the Bank of England. Yet the monument is shamefully neglected; its stonework is decayed and, worse, public lavatories have been built right next to it in an area of unbelievably crude municipal "landscaping".

**The Soane Simeon Memorial and public toilets, now closed**

The Soane Monuments Trust has already offered the council £15,000 to restore the Simeon Monument, but the (closed) lavatories need to be removed and the surrounding area properly landscaped. One might have thought Reading would be proud of a monument by a local hero of international fame — it is, after all, one of the few pieces of architecture in the town worth going to see. But no.

Reading is not poor, but nor is it in a hurry to withdraw its lavatorial insult, it seems. "I am aware at [sic] the frustration that you and other admirers of Soane may feel that we cannot give a clear date for restoration at this point," is how Michael Eakin, director of arts 'n' leisure, responds to appeals to do something. Why can't he give a date?

***PERHAPS it is fortunate the Simeon Monument isn't in the west of Scotland or it would probably be removed altogether to make way for cars. To the horror of the Friends of Inveraray Group, Argyll & Bute council hopes to enhance Inveraray with a new car park for tourists. This will merely require the chopping down of mature trees in The Avenue — originally laid out for a visit by Queen Victoria — and demolition of a large chunk of the Old Town Wall.***

***Has it occurred to councillors that such vandalism might be self-defeating as tourists visit Inveraray to see a remarkable and intact historic town? Presumably not. As it happens, Inveraray is of national and international significance as a "planned town", laid out by the nasty old Duke of Argyll at the time he rebuilt Inveraray Castle nearby in the mid-18th century. Inveraray is all of a piece: consistent in character and beautiful. But what is that compared with the overriding needs of motorists in Scotland?***

FINALLY, a lament for Gorton, a much-abused inner suburb of Manchester. In it stands the Anglican church of Our Lady of Mercy & St Thomas of Canterbury, designed in 1927 by Sir Walter Tapper — once architect to York Minster. Although only a fragment was initially built, it is a fine building with a cool, beautiful interior in the manner of Brunelleschi. Two decades ago, the money was found to complete this masterpiece and, at the same time, a new vicarage combined with sheltered housing was built. And now, despite this investment and resourcefulness, the church has been closed.

Earlier, the Franciscans abandoned the amazing Roman Catholic church of St Francis, handing it over to a property developer to be despoiled. And now the Church of England has pulled the plug on Gorton — so much for all the compassionate talk about caring for the inner cities.

E.W. Pugin's church has now been rescued by the Monastery of St Francis and Gorton Trust, supported by the World Monuments Fund. Tapper's church has been listed, but will that save it from degradation? Probably not. It is all a crying shame, and not just for poor Gorton.

*'Piloti'*

## LEGAL NEWS

**SIR Edward Somers' shock resignation as one of the two judges sitting alongside Lord Saville of Newdigate at the Bloody Sunday tribunal provides further evidence that the decision constantly to delay proceedings will ultimately bring the whole inquiry down.**

Somers, who is 72, told Northern Ireland secretary Peter Mandelson: "I shall not be able to bring to the task the energy and vigour which it will undoubtedly require over the remaining two to three years of its life."

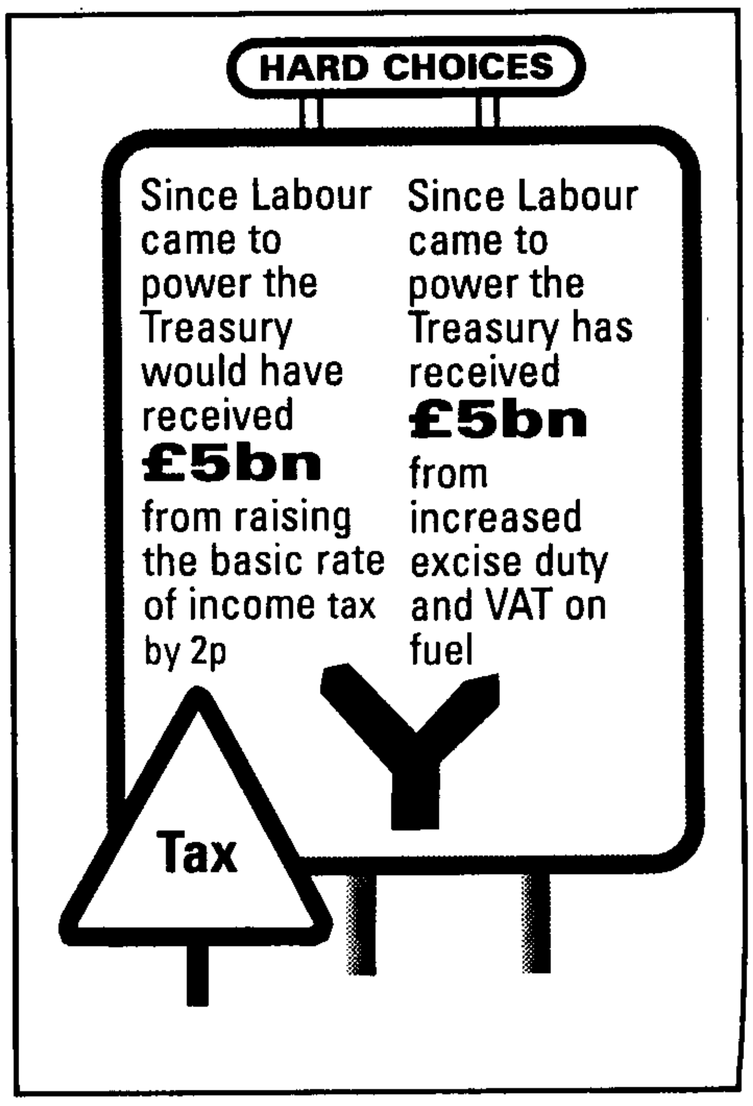
Three or four years, more like – and that's not counting delays due to assorted judicial reviews which are growing increasingly likely. Somers had apparently expected the whole business to be concluded this year or next, but only recently realised that Saville's snail-like approach, which is annoying all sides, makes that impossible.

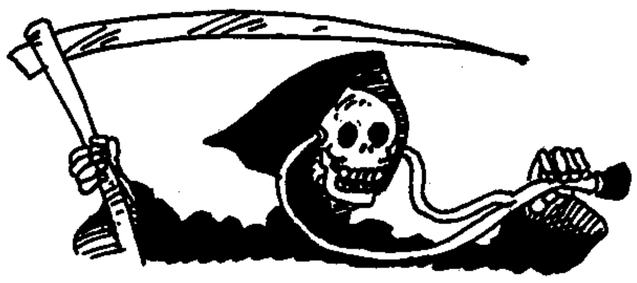
Actually not quite everyone is upset at slow speed. The law firms involved must have been impressed that the tribunal managed to run up a bill of £25.6m to the end of June. The final bill will now clearly exceed £100m, mostly in legal fees. These would be higher still had not everyone gone off on holiday for July and August, and had anything actually happened prior to the break, apart from Christopher Clarke QC reading out his opening statement for weeks on end (with no questions allowed).

Everyone was due back on 4 September, but this has been delayed until a new judge can be found willing to read himself into the job and spend the next few years of his life in Ulster (not one of Mandelsons easier assignments, given his own personal desperation to leave the place).

The potentially long delay in finding a new judge is compounded by the strong possibility of judicial reviews being sought if he or she isn't acceptable to the relatives of the dead, the soldiers etc, etc, etc.

Even more money for the lawyers.


HARD CHOICES
Since Labour came to power the Treasury would have received £5bn from raising the basic rate of income tax by 2p
Since Labour came to power the Treasury has received £5bn from increased excise duty and VAT on fuel
Tax



## DOING THE ROUNDS

**OF ALL the reforms being rushed through to give the general medical council (GMC) some semblance of credibility, perhaps the most urgent is that it should be allowed to find itself guilty of serious professional misconduct.**

The council's latest disaster — failing to act to protect patients from the gynaecologist Richard Neale, who was stuck off the medical register in Canada in 1985 — has led to the pathetic defence that the GMC is only allowed by law to take the criminal convictions of overseas doctors into account when considering an application to practice in the UK.

Neale was already working at the Friarage hospital in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, when he was erased from the Canadian register. The GMC was informed of this by the Canadian panel and by Neale's former colleague and friend, Dr Andrew Sear, who said: "They basically told me that what a doctor did in another country was no concern of theirs."

The GMC has been unable to uncover any record of the information passed on by Sear; but the president at that time was Sir John Walton, now Lord Walton of Detchant, who served as the preliminary screener of all the complaints. Any complaint deemed worthy of further investigation would pass on to the preliminary proceedings committee; but Jean Robinson, a lay member of the PCC in 1985, has no recollection of Neale's case even making it to this early stage. Why not?

Sir John Walton made no secret to his colleagues in the GMC that he was a freemason and Neale has bragged about having friends in high places. It is of course impossible to say whether the two are connected. Other senior doctors have also lined up in Neale's defence.

Dr Michael Saunders, medical director of Northallerton Health Services NHS Trust, gave him a peach of a reference. "He has established a considerable reputation in uro-gynaecology and has been an active contributor in the field... During his time at the trust there has been widespread respect for Mr Neale's clinical and intellectual abilities."

Anaesthetist and subsequent medical director Dr Michael Walton said: "The trust had no reason to believe there were particular clinical problems with his work." Mr Stephen Spoerry, director of operations at Friarage hospital, said: "There are no concern's about Mr Neale's clinical care." And a senior gynaecologist who worked with Neale, John Lart, said of him: "Throughout the time working together, I found Mr Neale to be a safe and competent obstetrician and gynaecological surgeon, always ready to increase his knowledge and learn new skills. He took an active part in the professional life of the hospital, promoting especially medical audit and risk management" (*sic*).

So how about an audit of Neale's work? Professor Smith from the Warrell Unit at St Mary's Hospital for Women and Children in Manchester did just that and concluded: "The review of Mr Neale's bladder neck surgery has not revealed any extraordinary features with regard to pre-operative symptoms and evaluation, intra-operative time and complications and post-operative complications and results. This does not investigate the quality of care of individual cases but does suggest that broadly speaking... his surgery was performed to a satisfactory level."

So why did the GMC conclude that he botched scores of operations, left women haemorrhaging, performed surgery without consent and carried out substandard work?

As always medical self-regulation is a sham with the outcome depending not on the facts of the case, but who has the most powerful and credible expert witnesses. The government had a golden opportunity to abolish the GMC in its national plan but ducked out, leaving nothing in place to stop another Bristol, Ledward, Shipman or Neale from recurring.

As Richard Neale said in his final plea to the GMC: "So what am I? A surgeon who had his best interests at heart."

Q: "Would you read that again please?"

Neale: "So what am I? A surgeon who had his best interests at heart..."

Q: "Can I just pause. I asked you twice to read the first sentence again. In my copy it says `A surgeon who had his patients' best interests at heart'."

Neale: "What did I say?"

Q: "Your best interests".

Neale: "I beg your pardon, a Freudian slip."

*M.D*

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## SIGNAL FAILURES

**THROUGHOUT the Paddington rail crash inquiry, Railtrack has refused to accept that bright sunlight shining on signals affected the driver of the errant Thames Train.**

So how does Railtrack explain an incident at Kilmarnock on 14 July when a driver phoned a signaller for instructions because sunlight was making a signal impossible to read?

According to Railtrack's confidential record, leaked to the *Eye*, the train ended up on the wrong track because driver and signaller had talked about different signals.

Even though the train was stationary and the driver had all the time in the world to read the signal in front of him, he was unable to do so because of the strength of the sunlight on the signal lights. The Thames Trains driver who died in the Paddington smash would have seen the crucial signal SN109 for seconds only. But somehow Railtrack and its lawyers have decided sunshine was not a factor in that case.

● **MORE proof that the privatised railway is a risk-free zone – for private investors if not passengers — comes with news that taxpayers may soon hand over £500m to cover Railtrack's bungling on the west coast line.**

Railtrack agreed to modernise the line, from London to Glasgow, by 2005 in return for a slice of Virgin Trains' future profits. Railtrack thought its share of the modernisation would cost about £2bn; but it is so inept at planning and managing projects that the cost for Railtrack is now closer to £5bn or more.

Cue the taxpayers' money. The rail regulator is indicating that £500m should be handed to Railtrack to help cover its huge budget overrun on the west coast upgrade. In other words, the nation now has to cough up if it wants Railtrack, a private company, to fulfil its contract to increase capacity on Britain's busiest line.

When bad old British Rail overran its budget, taxpayers footed the bill. So the Tories promised that in future the private sector would shoulder the risk instead. Now, however, private investors reap the rewards when things go to plan... and when things go pear-shaped the taxpayer still stumps up. *Plus ça change...*

There are some beneficiaries in the private railway, of course. Readers are already familiar with the multi-millionaire directors created at Prism Rail (see last *Eye*) and Great Western (see *Eyes passim* and the official Southall crash report). Next to cash in look set to be directors of the Go-Ahead group.

Go-Ahead owns Thames Trains, whose driver training and refusal to invest in automatic train protection are under scrutiny at the Paddington inquiry. Punctuality is poor on Thames Trains and even worse on Go-Ahead's Thameslink franchise, where passengers have suffered appalling overcrowding. Last month a French bidder offered £327m for the company, valuing the shares held by directors Martin Ballinger and Christopher Moyes at £23m and £19m respectively. Go-Ahead's directors dismissed the offer as "wholly inadequate". Nice work if you can get it.

*'Dr B. Ching'*

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## Down on the Farm

**ALTHOUGH the sight of farming lobby hounds in full cry after the wrong fox often provides good entertainment, the current hysteria over TB and badgers is not a laughing matter.**

With TB in cattle becoming an epidemic that costs the ministry of agriculture (MAFF) more than £30m a year and farmers much more, there are urgent calls for action from nearly everyone. The latest pair to weigh in have been National Farmers' Union (NFU) chief Ben Gill, and leading dairy auctioneer Tom Brooksbank with a notably ignorant diatribe. The trouble is, no one has anything to suggest other than gassing badgers. And that has almost nothing to recommend it.

The ineradicable belief that cattle get TB from badgers, and that reducing badger numbers will reduce outbreaks of TB in cattle, began almost by accident and has been perpetuated by MAFF and the industry in the finest scapegoat tradition. Apart from the fact that some badgers carry TB — along with rats, foxes, deer and other mammals, all of which seem to have escaped notice — there is little direct evidence to implicate them. Hence the Krebs report and the current trial culls to clarify the badger's role — if any.

TB is a respiratory infection; and unless the two species spend the quiet hours of the night kissing each other, badgers cannot be the main source of infection. Nor does the rapid spread of TB to new areas makes any sense — cattle get on lorries and move around the country; badgers, hardly ever.

As MAFF has belatedly recognised with its husbandry panel, there is more to disease than infection. Even in "hotspots" where many farms find TB reactors in every test, some never do. There has been no research into this at all, but the suspicion exists that many cattle, especially dairy herds, which have a narrow genetic base, unnatural diets and metabolic stress, and are often awash with drugs which damage the immune response, are easy targets for TB and other bugs.

For a source of infection one need look no further than the national herd itself. Even at its lowest level TB in cattle was still endemic, and the long test interval combined with the notorious inaccuracy of the test, allows many cattle to avoid detection. The simplest immediate measure MAFF could take is to test more often.

None of this interests the NFU or the vet groups such as the BCVA, who with MAFF connivance tried to use the TB Forum — an informal discussion group formed to consider other measures — to force a vote in favour of a widespread badger cull. After all, they already know whodunnit, even if the scientists don't. Any other solutions could mean troublesome interference with farming methods, and that really would be unacceptable.

*'Gumboot'*

**ELSEWHERE, government plans to close down what remains of Britain's dairy industry proceed apace. The latest blow is an edict from the intervention board (IB), drastically reducing the number of incineration firms allowed to burn carcases of older cows which fall sick or are injured on the farm.**

In happier times such "casualties" were removed by the local knacker, who would pay £50 or more for the privilege of turning them into pet food. Then the knackers were closed down by BSE, and any cows over 30 months had to be taken off by some nearby abattoir for slaughter and incineration. This turned the farmer's former modest profit into a cost of £50.

Now the IB has decided, for mysterious reasons, to limit the "right to incinerate" to around 20 hand-picked firms. By exercising a near monopoly, these firms will now in every sense "make a killing" as farmers are compelled to transport casualties vast distances to whichever approved incinerator is nearest.

Nick Adames, who runs a dairy herd near Bognor Regis, recently had an apologetic letter from the incineration firm just down the road telling him it was no longer permitted to handle his animals. He would now have to pay an extra £30 a time, on top of the £50 slaughtering fee, for animals to be taken to either a pet incinerator in Hertfordshire or to Wessex Incineration in Frome, Somerset, a journey of nearly 100 miles.

The intervention board has given no explanation for this new system other than to claim it is part of a "cost cutting" exercise. What it means, of course, is that it is adding a further 50 percent on to the costs to the farmer and heaven knows what on to the profits of those privileged incineration firms which are allowed to operate as a very lucrative cartel.

*'Even Newer Muckspreader'*

■ ROTTEN BOROUGHS ■

# KNOCKING DOWN THE TOON

A NEWCASTLE city council's plan to solve the social and housing problems of some of its most deprived estates by bulldozing the lot, shipping out the inhabitants and replacing them with a string of yuppie "villages" along the Tyne has outraged residents and delighted property developers in equal measure.

The council is now engaged in a "consultation" exercise for its £1bn "Going for Growth" scheme, which if implemented will see 6,500 homes demolished and replaced by 20,000 flats and townhouses over the next 20 years. Residents, who aren't actually being asked what they would like to see happen to their areas, have not been impressed by a series of neighbourhood meetings which present the scheme as a *fait accompli*. Labour leader Tony Flynn and cabinet colleague Kevan Jones have both made clear their determination that the scheme will go ahead come what may. In June, Jones declared sensitively: "The giro ghettoes are going to be demolished."

Labour peer and dome architect Richard Rogers, whose firm drafted the proposals, has sought to reassure locals, saying: "We are nowhere near a position to be able to say what specific areas may be built up or demolished." It was "unsustainable", he has said, to pull down viable houses and move people who are happy. In which case, ask residents, why do the council's own maps already identify streets in areas such as Scotswood, North Benwell and Cruddas Park as clearly earmarked for demolition? And why is the council buying some properties as fast as they come on the market, while neglecting to place tenants in others as they fall vacant?

Locals say that, while the problem of empty and vandalised homes obviously needs to be addressed, wiping out long-established working class communities and their extended families is not the answer. Particularly bitter are those who have bought their homes under right-to-buy, and the many council tenants who have spent their own money modernising their homes.

One glimmer of hope is that the groundswell of opposition is at last beginning to alarm the Toon's thick and complacent backbench Labour councillors. They have begun to realise that, once Newcastle's East and West Ends have been "socially cleansed", there may well be no one left to vote for them. Fifteen of them actually plucked up the courage to, er, abstain when a Lib Dem motion condemning the proposals was debated at a council meeting last week.

# TENDER TRAP

BUSINESS as usual in Durham, where a district auditor's "investigation" has concluded that no action is needed over the *Eye*'s revelation (991) that a £1m film project for the city council had been awarded to Brendan Quayle, a tennis-playing chum of chief executive Colin Shearsmith, without being put out to tender.

Alas, residents worried about how and why their money is being spent on a 20-minute "millennium" (yawn) history of Durham are not in a position to judge because the council, which recently vowed to be "seen to be open" after a bollocking from regional Labour party officials, has not made the auditor's findings public.

Despite bending over backwards to find nothing amiss, the auditor's report in fact reveals that as early as 1994 Brendan Quayle, at the time a part-time TV producer, was paid £2,000 for "services" in "developing the concept of a film-based visitor attraction" which would attract funding from the Millennium Commission. Quayle recommended that US company Megasystems Inc should get the £386,000 contract to install a large-format film projection system. Unnamed "officers were satisfied", says the report, that Quayle's "unique concept" was just what Durham needed — and that Quayle should therefore be paid some £650,000 to make the movie. Why? Quayle had no track record in large format film, and no one else was invited to compete for the work. By November 1997 Quayle and others had already been paid a total of £29,000, yet elected members did not hear about him for another year — four years after he first became involved.

"We have seen no evidence to support allegations... in relation to the council's chief executive concerning corruption and patronage," says the report. The chief executive, Colin Shearsmith, admitted being a tennis partner of Quayle's after the *Eye*'s story appeared, yet he never officially declared this — a clear breach of the national code of local government conduct.

The report lamely concludes that at some future date officers will have to explain why "it was considered inappropriate to undergo a formal tendering process". The obvious answer, that an open process would have thrown up a more qualified film-maker who could have done the job for a fraction of the cost, is unlikely to be on offer. And the obvious question — why £1m is being spent on a film that no one will want to watch in a cinema that may never be built — has not even been asked.

## CARRY ON COUNCILLOR

LABOUR councillor Mick Jewitt, chairman of the highways committee in the London borough of Croydon and the man ultimately responsible for keeping the borough free of abandoned vehicles, has had his car towed away... after, er, abandoning it in the town hall car park for 10 months.

# LORD OF LAIRGATE

ANOTHER example of the brilliant leadership of East Riding of Yorkshire council (Eryc) chief executive Darryl Stephenson (*Eyes passim*) comes to light.

In December 1998 "Deaf" Eryc declared its former offices at Lairgate Hall, one of the few grade I listed buildings in Beverley, "surplus to requirements" and sold it to local businessman Philip Bramley for £500,000.

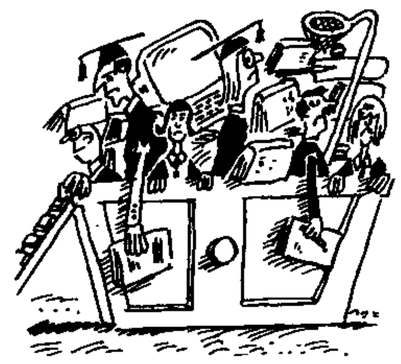
Locals were concerned that Bramley might not be a suitable steward for the hall, which was built in 1700, is decorated with delicate hand-painted Chinese wallpaper and contains valuable antique furniture on "perpetual loan" to the new owner. Bramley, a secondhand car dealer (until he went bust), had been fined £400 in 1997 for assaulting two bailiffs with an axe when they went to his home to try to recover unpaid council tax on behalf of Eryc. In the same year he bought some listed cottages in the village of Sancton and altered them without planning permission.

But Darryl brushed aside the objections, praising Bramley's "track record of restoring historical buildings to a pristine condition". He was clearly impressed by Bramley's boast that a specially set up company, Landmark East Riding Ltd, would be carrying out a £3.5m renovation of the hall, which would be converted to "prestigious" offices. Yet at the time Bramley's two existing companies had net liabilities of £4,076 and he was listed as "high risk" by a credit checking agency.

Not much progress was made on the hall's renovation in the first 18 months of Bramley's ownership. Perhaps it was because he had other things on his mind, such as being banned for drink-driving in February this year, being imprisoned for two weeks in April for non-payment of maintenance and a county court judgment against Landmark for debts of more than £11,000. In June Bramley was declared bankrupt.

Another visit from the bailiffs would seem to be on the cards. It is to be hoped that he does not start waving his axe around among Eryc's antiques in the Chinese Room when they call.

PS: Having got rid of "surplus to requirements" Lairgate Hall for £500,000, "Thick" Eryc now finds itself... short of office space. A proposed new extension to County Hall will cost well over £1m.



## High Principals

**WHEN Lynda Fairhurst arrived as principal of Shena Simon College in Manchester four years ago it was a popular sixth form college. So she took the logical step of, er, pouring resources into adult education instead.**

La Fairhurst dreamt up a wonderful new scheme to promote English for students of other languages (ESOL) and do away with heads of department. The fruits of her labour have now been revealed in a further education funding council (FEFC) report which describes the college management as "lacking in rigour" and all but one subject areas as less than satisfactory.

ESOL is, unsurprisingly, the only subject to receive any praise (grade one on a scale of five) while all other courses scored a pisspoor grade four. The report also pinpoints the failure of management to recruit and retain students.

La Fairhurst's reaction has been to slash the number of courses at the college and place a cap on student numbers. A-level courses will be phased out, with no new students being taken on in September. There is of course no suggestion that her failure to address the inspectors' criticisms means she intended to run these courses down all along.

Following in the fine college tradition of making difficult decisions during the summer recess, la Fairhurst has written to staff to tell them that owing to the "proposed diminution in the curriculum and consequent restructuring" there will be 33 redundancies over the next six months.

**ACADEMICS have to be careful nowadays when preparing course literature, and Reading University has even invented a new linguistic crime.**

In a two-page memo on how to write descriptions of courses, under the illuminating heading "Writing aims and learning outcomes for module specifications", lecturers are advised to avoid certain words and phrases "because they are too difficult to quantify".

The offending terms include: "know", "understand", "obtain a working knowledge of", "have a good grasp of", "be familiar with" and "learn the basics of". Only words like "appraise", "formulate", "conceptualise", "initiate" and "synthesise" should be used — presumably so no student can be failed at the end of the course for "knowing" nothing and having "learnt" very little.

**IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — UP NORTH** KNIFE & PACKER

EDINBURGH FRINGE: FIRST NIGHT NERVES
IT'S NO USE, QUIN, I JUST CAN'T DO THIS... I NEED DIRECTION!!!
I MEAN, WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION HERE?!?
FOR GOODNESS SAKE, JEZ, JUST ORDER YOUR BREAKFAST
Morningside B&B

# FYE TV

**Repeats (All channels)**
**Big Brother (Channel 4)**
**The Fitz (BBC2)**
**Tinsel Town (BBC2)**

**FOR a long time now, culture has kept university or parliamentary terms, with nothing coming out in the summer. This was on the basis that anyone who mattered – critics and, to a lesser extent, consumers – was in Tuscany. However, in recent years this warm-weather embargo has been broken in many areas of the arts: big plays (Ayckbourn's *House/Garden*), films (*Mission Impossible II*) and books (Harry Potter 4, Julian Barnes's *Love etc*) appear in beach time.**

A glance at the current schedules suggests television has failed to notice this shift in the calendar. Take, for example, Monday 7 August. On BBC2, almost every programme from 1.35pm until 10.20pm was a repeat with the exception of a couple of news shows.

On other days and channels, though, it's clear that the picture is becoming more complicated. TV execs have now come up with various disguises for the replayed tape: .elegant variations on that now battered euphemism "another chance to see".

The first is the Heritage or Vintage Repeat. Rather in the way that cinema calls its repeats "classic reissues", there are now a number of shows which have been quietly ranked as priceless antiques. The grand-daddy of these is *Dad's Army* (BBC1) which runs in an almost continuous loop and has done much to remove the stigma from TV repeats because its quality oddly survives repetition. *Fawlty Towers* (BBC1) recently got a channel controller out of a hole again. And *Whatever Happened To The Likely Lads?* (BBC2) seems also to have achieved permanently listed status. ITV is currently seeking this accolade for *Inspector Morse* – back on Saturdays and now rivalling *Dad's Army* in re-runs – and *Cracker*, which counts as a new show on Channel 4 although the small-print admits "previously seen on ITV".

These series are now regarded as equivalent to the permanent display in great art galleries. So the fact that they are there all the time should not be taken as a suggestion of television's current lack of ideas but rather as proof of the sheer richness of the medium's cumulative achievements.

Critics are slowly being educated to believe this. When *This Life* (BBC2) occupied 40 or so

post-*Newsnight* slots recently, Controller Root received not the usual chorus of bored complaints about the lack of new material but praise for allowing this "rediscovery". In another sign of this shift in thinking, *Walking With Dinosaurs* (BBC1) – back on Saturdays – has just become one of the few repeats to be granted a *Radio Times* front cover.

Apart from the Heritage Repeat, another popular disguise for re-runs is the Themed Repeat in which a jumble sale tries to pass itself off as a shop opening. Last Saturday, for example, BBC2 had an old edition of *The Dick Emery Show* and yet another screening for a show in the *Match Of The Seventies* football series but please realise that these were not the result of just another reshuffle of the tape shelf. They were part of a theme evening surrounding a new series called *I Love The Seventies*, although, while never seen before in that order, this theoretically fresh project consisted of news clips and pop videos featured in previous decadal compilations.

But, while the Heritage Repeat and the Themed Repeat show how sophisticated execs are becoming with their recycling, there are genuine signs this year that new material is being allowed to see the sun. For example, what will probably prove to be the year's talking point series – Channel 4's cynically voyeuristic but addictive **Big Brother** – is a July launch.

And, unusually, BBC2 launches two big series this week: the Scottish shagging-and-shooting-up drama **Tinsel Town** – a McThis Life with wobble-cam production and even more explicit sex and drugs – and **The Fitz**, a new sitcom from BBC Northern Ireland in which a family of "nutters" living on the Irish border act out sub-*Father Ted* scenes including a Catholic mother practising for her own funeral by lying alive in her coffin during a fake wake.

Churlish as it may be to say this when faced with fresh material in summer, none of these series is much good although *Big Brother* is a landmark in degradation which has to be watched by anyone interested in the way the country and the culture are going.

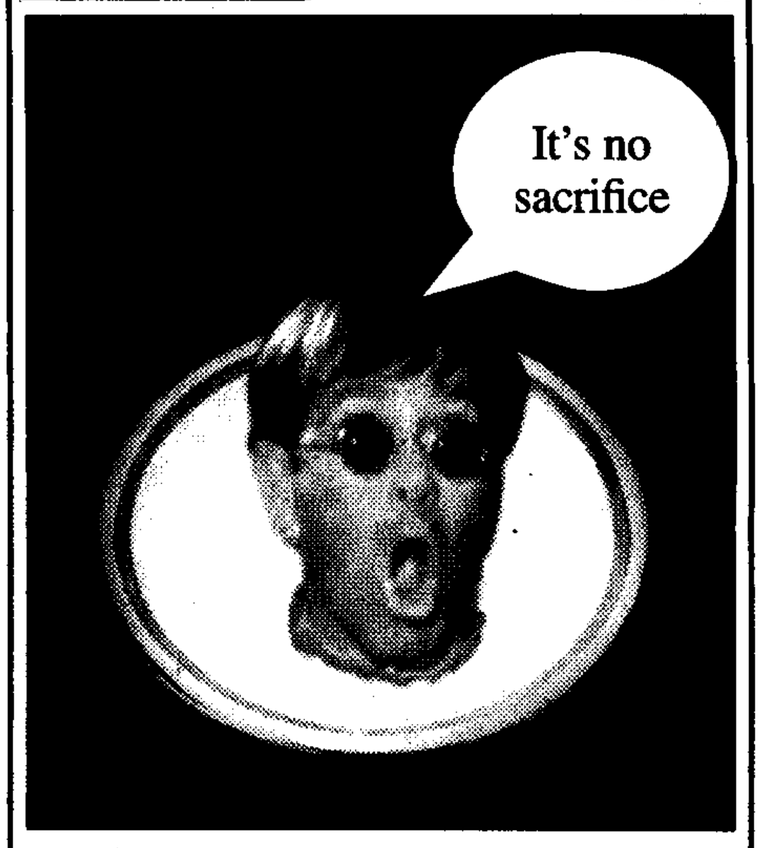
The three series do, though, have someone else in common. They are all daring and risky: on-the-edge television. The summer, it seems, has become the time for experimentation. There's some logic in this. Audiences drop in summer, anyway, so it's a sensible time to screen shows with minority appeal. Millions of families are by definition away from home so there's less risk of moral majority outrage.

The third leg of the theory is probably that critics are so starved of new shows to review that they will tend to be softer than they might otherwise be. Well, it was a nice theory but sorry.

*'Square Eyes'*

## SPLIT personalities

**Bob Moore**




**Elton John The Baptist**

## GOING LIVE

**JENNY BOND, the BBC's royal correspondent, and ITV's Libby Wiener share the honours this week for pointless live broadcasts.**

Bond appeared live outside Buckingham Palace for BBC *Breakfast News* on 4 August a mere six hours before the Queen Mother's birthday parade was due to start. She led the 7am bulletin even though there was nobody at all to interview and nothing to see.

On ITV, nine hours after everybody else has gone home, Libby Wiener (ITN Nightly News at 11.15pm) stood by the closed gates of a totally silent and dark Clarence House. She revealed that the "day has now come to a close" and that the QM is "deeply touched by all the tributes".

**OH, YEAH?** "We all want to make Channel 5 a huge success and we know that we are significantly better than when we launched three and a half years ago. Now, we are at least as good as the other broadcasters."

— Dawn Airey, *Media Guardian, 31 July 2000*

EastEnders
WHAT'S NEW DOWN THE VIC, BABS?
YER GET PALLY WITH THE KRAYS
MARRY A GANGSTER ...
CARRY ON IN SOME OF THE MOST EMBARRASSINGLY AWFUL FILMS IN CINEMA HISTORY...
AND YER GET AN MBE FOR SERVICES TO YER COUNTRY!
"Windsors all round!"
Pyne

# MEDIA NEWS

**MORE evidence of Greg Dyke's promised cull of management jobs in order to pump more money into programme making emerges from BBC Scotland.**

Currently being "re-structured", BBC Scotland is about to lose 16.5 producers – programme makers – while a number of management positions have been ring-fenced thanks to canny brown-nosing. One department will be left with two managers controlling two producers.

Meanwhile in the *Ariel* propaganda rag, the way that BBC jobs are advertised has also been "re-structured". There are now headings for "Programme Making" and "Journalism" jobs. "Business Support and Management" is now a "secondary" category. This week's tally of vacancies, though, tells the same old story. Jobs for those putting programmes on air: 18. Jobs for suits: 34.

**NERVOUS BBC health and safety teams, anxious not to join the exodus of "support" staff earmarked for Dyke's first sacking spree, have sent an amazingly pompous look-at-us-getting-on-with-our-jobs "SAFETY ALERT" to studio managers.**

Headlined "Warning to Check for Damaged Tape Spools", it borrows the language of air accident investigation to highlight a problem with, er, "all plastic tape spools".

Following "a recent near-miss" at Bush House, apparently, "all plastic tape spools should be visually examined before use" so that "hair line cracks" can be identified. A forensic-style photo of a cracked spool serves as a terrifying example of what to look for. After all, "plastic can be thrown from such spools in such a manner that injury could be sustained".

No actual "spool-related" incidents have occurred so far. Phew. This means that SMs can carry on working their 12- to 14-hour shifts in windowless, cramped edit suites with no time for meal breaks, seldom if ever allowed by producers even to take a screen break and under the added pressure of crap equipment crashing on them or imminent, compulsory redundancy, in relative safety.

**IT is all very classy and upmarket in Greg Dyke's new BBC. The director general took a box at the Albert Hall on the first night of the Proms and filled it with various BBC arts luminaries.**

Sadly the tone was lowered by Germaine Greer bursting in looking for Joan Bakewell whom she felt had betrayed her by publicly revealing Germaine's early fling with John Peel.

"Where's that fucking Joan Bakewell?" she shouted. "I'm going to fucking drop her." By this, Germaine apparently did not mean she was going to drop her socially, but was using a bit of current slang to indicate she was going to knock her to the floor. Fortunately the concert began before any violence could materialise.

**ITN executives are nursing severe headaches at the moment, and not only because of the almost ceaseless round of leaving parties held in the hostelries of Grays Inn Road over the last few weeks. It has more to do with the self-inflicted injuries the ITN suits have caused.**

Their belief that "only one or two people" would leave when new terms and conditions were demanded of the workforce has proved astoundingly wide of the mark – despite grim threats from ITN that "turncoats" would never be welcomed back. The truth is that the 54 people who are leaving will cost the company about £20m in payoffs and replacement costs. Sky and the BBC can scarcely believe their luck in being gifted so much news production expertise.

Many of the more talented staff have now elected to go freelance, knowing they can pick and choose the more "social" ITN shifts or work elsewhere. One enterprising freelance has offered to create a "rostering website" to cope with the huge crewing demands ITN will now have to fill. The website would effectively make about one third of the lower ITN management redundant at a stroke – but, strangely, this simple cost saving has not been pursued.

In a final *coup de grace* to ITN's reputation, the company has hired a consultant psychiatrist on a contract worth £100,000 to establish why morale is so low. When staff heard the news, needless to say, their morale plunged still lower.

**ROBIN OAKLEY, the BBC's outgoing political editor, appeared in the *Grauniad*'s My Media section on 31 July.**

When asked about his attitude to the new media, Mr Oakley revealed: "I'm not an internet man." This seems a trifle perverse since his new job is political editor of www.cnn.com

**BBC staff at Millbank wonder if corporate affairs supremo Anne Sloman is getting delusions of grandeur, to judge by preparations for this autumn's Labour party conference.**

Recently the Beeb agreed to be a part sponsor with, bizarrely, the union for low paid workers, Unison, of a special bridge/platform to whisk Labour big wigs from the Conference hotel to the studios at the conference centre, without the inconvenience of mingling with delegates. Concerned that Labour's Brighton conference could become the target of ant-capitalist rioters, BBC managers have also hit on the idea of sending selected staff for training in handling "riot situations".

**THE Bafta jury will surely have to give a special award to Sky News for its deeply tasteful and unvoyeuristic coverage of the Concorde crash, including the following exchange.**

*Presenter:* "We have news that the French authorities have amateur video footage of the take-off." *Aviation expert:* "It's a pity they got it before we did!"

# MUSIC NEWS

**MS Jessye Norman is a singer who exhausts superlatives: magnificent, stupendous, godlike are the standard package. But her godlike ways exhaust the patience of the concert managements who book her.**

When she favours venues like the Barbican with an appearance she requires them to erect a special "Jessye screen" to shield her from the vulgar gaze while she ascends the steps up to the platform. Apparently she doesn't think she looks good going up steps, which may well be right. And in any event, she also insists on closing down the backstage orchestra canteen – because she hears the rattle of the cups and saucers in her dressing room and it offends her.

But her hubris reached new heights last week when she swept into London for a concert at the Albert Hall. The BBC had booked her for a Prom and asked her, incidentally, to record a radio interview with the music critic Michael White which would be broadcast at the interval. Her agreement depended on seeing the questions in advance, so an appropriately inoffensive list of possibilities was sent off for approval. She said yes. Then she said no. Then she said yes again. And then she changed the day and hour of the recording five times before cancelling altogether.

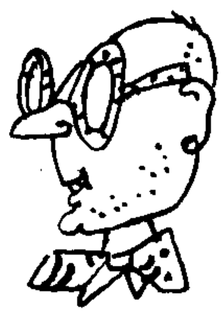
In addition, there was the seven-page fax her management sent to the BBC setting out her requirements for the whole engagement. It was nothing if not thorough, covering everything from the flowers to be presented to her (roses are preferred) to the demeanour of the Hall staff (who are to be instructed that no one may offer "gratuitous commentary" on any request she deigns to make). A stage manager and one assistant must be immediately to hand at all times, together with a table of a certain size equipped with face tissues, a mirror, several bottles of Evian water (no other will do) and a waste paper basket. No flowers are to be placed on the stage, though green plants are permissible. And her dressing room must be damp-mopped before she arrives, with all upholstery and carpets vacuumed and the temperature monitored to reach no more than 69°F. There must be a window, which Ms Norman will open herself if desired. And there must be a particular kind of humidifier which the Hall management are required to photograph in advance and send the picture to Ms Norman's agents for endorsement (written details without photograph are unacceptable).

The list goes on… and it's providing much mirth behind closed doors at the BBC, where the biggest laughs are reserved for its more basic demands. Along with everything else in the great diva's dressing room there must be "a sturdy chair". And her hotel suite must contain a king-sized bed with "firm mattress".

*'Lunchtime O'Boulez'*

# AD NAUSEAM

**SO, Jamie Oliver is the new face of Sainsbury's. He follows in the footsteps of numerous other national faves such as John Cleese and, er, well, many other unforgettable campaigns.**



The latest spot features the pug-faced likely lad knocking up a "ruby" for his mates after a night at the boozer. After a trip to an all-night Sainsbury's he returns to a just-so loft and blitzes a lime or two to create a makeshift extravaganza in no time while his cohorts play computer games and generally oik about in a way yoof viewers are supposed to find appealing.

If anything has had more recent exposure than the young chef's mugshot, then it is the pitiful performance of Sainsbury's share price. So shareholders may wish to know how come they've just forked out £1m for Oliver to front this latest push.

Doubtless you will not recall that in-between the lamentable John Cleese "Value to shout about" slots of late 1998 and the current efforts, a new strap — "Making Life Taste Better" — suddenly surfaced. This slogan (a sorry pun that left most consumers somewhere between bemusement and indifference) was the brainchild of our chums at M&C Saatchi. On the back of the whole Cleese debacle and with Sainsbury's management looking for a wrist to slap, Abbott Mead Vickers, who'd peddled Sainsbury's propaganda for the best part of 20 years, had been dumped.

Yet, lo and behold, this June the account mysteriously left M&C Saatchi and reemerged at AMV, leading to the recent Oliver work. The reason, predictably, has little to do with brilliant creative ideas and everything to do with old buddies reconvening for a chinwag and a hearty lunch.

In January this year Peter Davis became chief executive of Sainsbury's. In a previous guise, Davis was "The Man From The Pru", a winning line dreamt up by AMV. In fact it was Davis who, as Sainsbury's marketing head, took the account to AMV in the 70s from… Saatchis. So when he arrived at JS he found the people he'd sacked in place of the people he knew. This oversight has now been redressed, with AMV back where it belongs and everyone happy.

Of course as usual the consumer at home will have hardly noticed any difference. Interesting to note that when the account returned to AMV, it put it about that its creative head Peter Souter had actually lured the work his way by hinting at a "big new creative idea" which had left Davis intrigued and gagging for more. It now transpires that that "idea" was "fork out £1m for a household name and don't change much else".

It's not exactly unheard of in big brand advertising, but it certainly left those M&C boys smarting: the spurned mutterings emanating from their swank HQ at Golden Square suggest that getting Oliver was their idea, meaning AMV's total creative input was "and pay him more money". Something smells a bit funny, or is that the "ruby"?

## DUMB BRITAIN

**MORE from the *This Morning with Richard and Judy* archive…**

**Richard**: Name the Spanish island famous for its club scene.

**Contestant**: Spain.

# Letters

## Kick in the teeth

*Sir,*

*As a regular recipient of the sound of "sucking teeth" whilst on my beat, I have always considered it offensive, yet unlike DAZED & CONFUSED (Eye 1007) never thought it meant "suck your mother's c**t". However, it would appear what I think it means, and the people who direct it at me think it means, is more in line than the notions of the average liberal social worker.*

*At a recent two-day CRR (community race relations) training session, which all Met officers have to attend and consists mainly of being told we are racists, on day one a social worker on the training staff asked us what we thought, as she called it, "kissing teeth" meant. When we replied with a chorus of "f*ck off", "p*ss off", and the like, she said "No, you're all wrong. It's the same as a white person tutting."*

*On day 2, we were put in a room with a dozen youths, both black and white, male and female, from a local estate (who at £10 for the hour's appearance were better paid then me by far), and the same social worker asked them what they thought it meant to "kiss their teeth". The immediate reply was a chorus of "f*ck off", "f*ck you", "p*ss off", "f*ck off Fed".*

*The same social worker was asked what her reaction would be if her children sucked their teeth at her, and funnily enough, her reaction would have been much more than if they had tutted at her.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*KNACKERED KNACKER*
*OF THE MET,*

*Via e-mail.*

## Degree of error

*Sir,*

*I was appalled by the cover of issue 1007 of Private Eye in which you poke fun at the Queen Mother. Don't you know that the proof strength of spirits is measured in degrees, and not as a percentage?*

*I am seriously tempted to take out a subscription to your magazine just so that I can cancel it.*

*Yours pedantically,*
*O.E. MALY,*

*Hackbridge, Surrey.*

## Better than Horlicks?

*Sir,*

*Your cover for Eye 1007 is very witty, but there is another side to it.*

*My grandmother also lived to 100. While she retained her mental faculties to the end, she unfortunately had to go into residential care at the age of 98.*

*She enjoyed a tot of whisky at bedtime, but this attracted censorious remarks from some of the nurses (or rather "care assistants" - average age 17, who think nothing of getting blind drunk every weekend).*

*If you can make it to 100 with your marbles intact, then you must be doing something right. Good luck to you Ma'am, I say!*

*Yours faithfully,*
*ROBERT PARKER,*

*Nottingham.*

## For whom the Pell toils...

*Sir,*

*It was most generous of you to devote so much space in your latest edition to discussing our recent exclusive stories about leaked memos by Philip Gould and the tax affairs of Lord Levy of Mill Hill. We would be grateful, however, if you would be kind enough to allow us to correct a small misapprehension that somehow crept into your copy. It is simply untrue to state, as your correspondent does, that Benjamin Pell, now widely acclaimed as Benji the Binman, was instructed by us to raid the rubbish bins of Gould or Levy.*

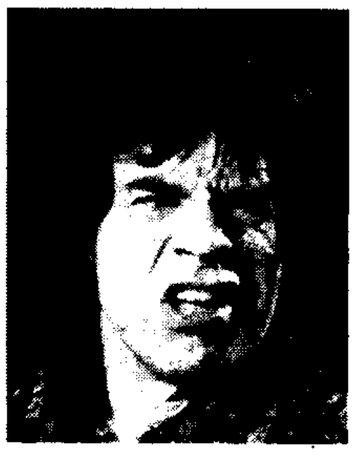
*Let us state categorically and for the record, Pell had nothing whatsoever to do with our stories about those two gentlemen, as Pell himself has subsequently confirmed. Neither, for that matter, did Max Clifford, despite the absurd suggestions of the Guardian to the contrary.*

*Propagation of such desperate propaganda from Downing Street does little credit to the intelligence of your readers.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*DAVID LEPPARD, PAUL NUKI,*
*GARETH WALSH,*

*Insight Team, The Sunday Times.*

## Lookalike



**Hulk**

**Jagger**

*Sir,*

*Does Mick Jagger's agent realise his client is moonlighting?*

*I think he should be told.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*MARTIN BOOTH,*

*Langport, Somerset.*

## Fishing for compliments

*Sir,*

*The Old Trout has a nasty dose of apoplectic hack disease and your readers should be warned that he has lost the plot (Down on the Fish Farm, 28 July). He doesn't like fish farms or foreigners and obviously has no concerns about the jobs of 6,000 fish farm workers in rural Scotland, so why let facts get in the way of such prejudices?*

*Fact – Shellfish poisoning – even with an "r" in the month – was reported hundreds of years before the arrival of fish farming.*

*Fact – Increases in algal blooms have occurred in areas remote from fish farms.*

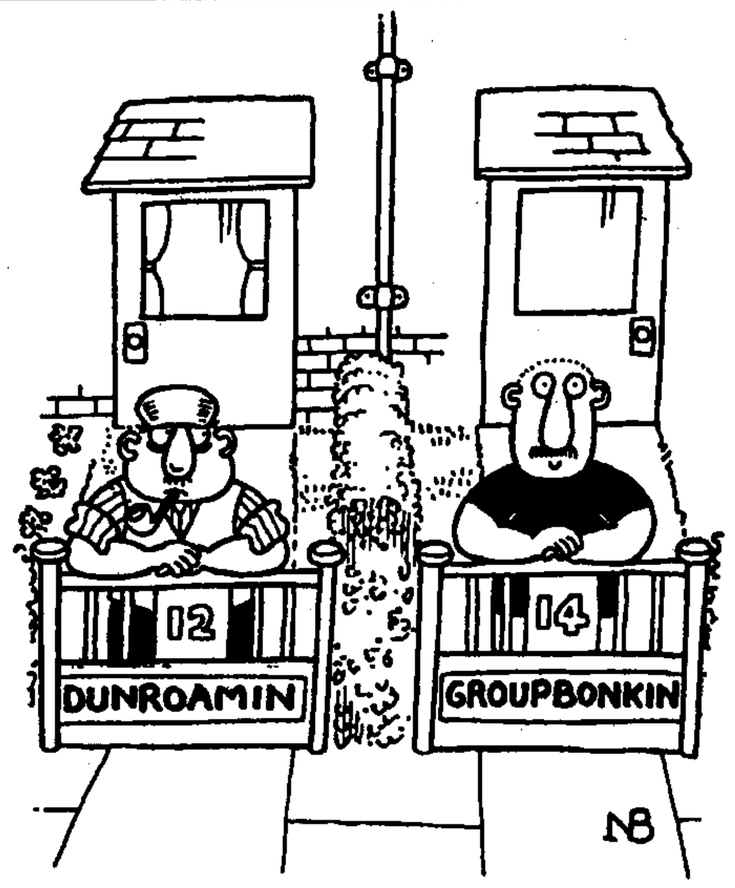
*Fact – The decline of wild salmon has not been confined to areas with fish farms: indeed declines have occurred throughout the range of the Atlantic salmon.*

*And, just to spoil Old Trout's vision of doom, there seems to have been a better run of wild fish in Scottish rivers this year.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*'RED' JOHN HOME ROBERTSON,*

*Scottish Fisheries Minister.*

## NEW OLD SAYINGS




**An Englishman's home is his cottage**

## Lock out

*Sir,*

*David Lock MP disputes the bed numbers and costs in our report claiming I "didn't bother to check my facts" with his local health authority when writing a report on the planning assumptions behind the new Worcestershire Royal Infirmary (Eye 1006).*

*On 10 July 2000 the BMA and the local medical committee invited the health authority and myself to attend a meeting in the presence of over 100 people where they confirmed our findings.*

*Specifically:*

*The costs of the PFI contract rose from £49m to £108m with further £8m for equipment in a separate deal, again through PFI.*

*The new facility will serve 100,000 more people but there will be 44 percent fewer acute inpatient beds with the closure of 219 beds at Kidderminster and 32 at WRI (relative to the 1994/5 baseline, the one used by the Trust).*

*The "small matter of 600 beds" he claims we omitted never featured in any of the health authority's published plans for acute in-patient care at Kidderminster Hospital and the WRI. If an extra 600 acute hospital beds were being pulled out of a hat, that would indeed be a cause for rejoicing. Alas as Mr Lock is surely aware, over 400 of those beds are "community beds". This is no mere academic nicety. Acute inpatient beds provide consultant-led care for very sick people and are located in general hospitals offering a comprehensive range of specialist services. Community beds have none of these characteristics. If David Lock thinks his constituents won't know the difference he is mistaken.*

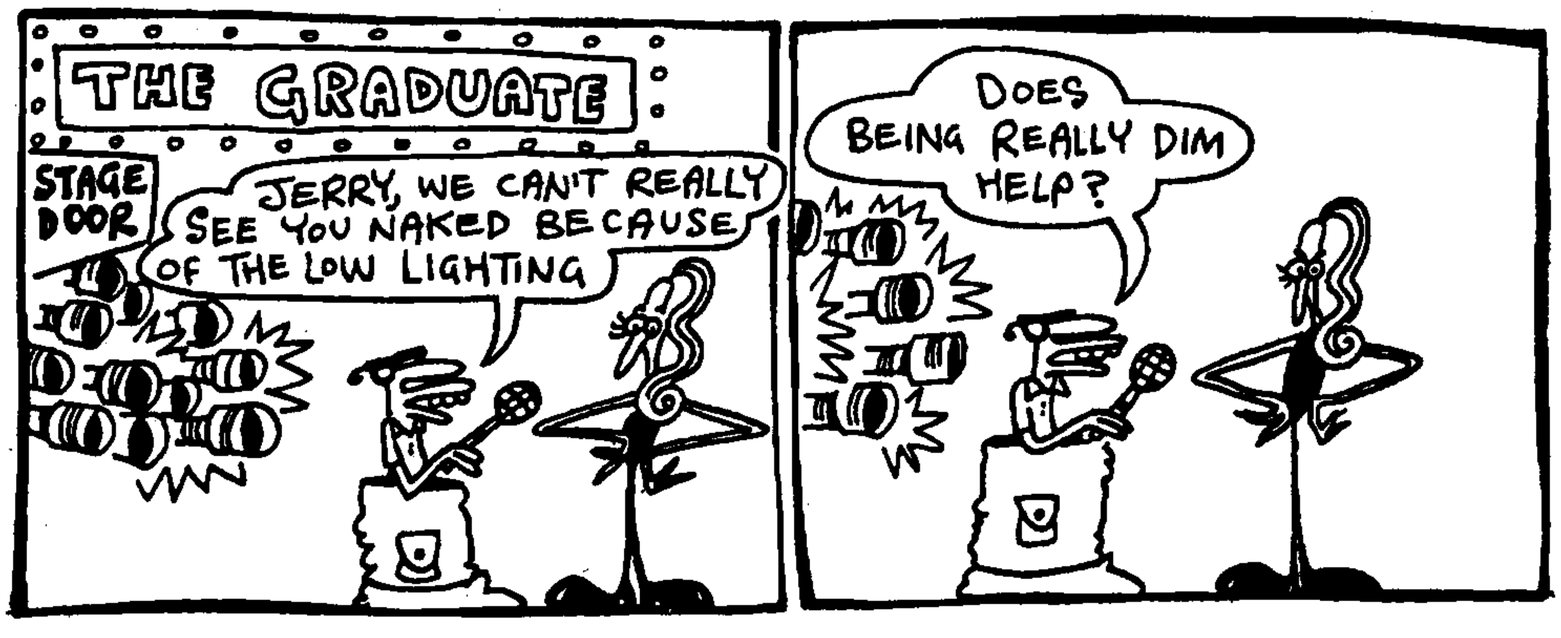
*David Lock would serve his constituents better i he ignored spin and concentrated on the facts. Eye readers can obtain copies of our Report, Deficits Before Patients, at the following address: Allyson Pollock (Prof), School of Public Policy, University College London, 29-30 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9QU.*

*ALISON POLLOCK,*

*University College London.*

## SUPERMODELS

KERBER



## I-SPY

*Corfu*

**Submitted by Stewart Russell.** £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

## Proper Charlie

*Sir,*

*My colleague, Cardiff councillor Charlie Gale, merited a whole new column in your last issue under the title of "Carry On Councillor".*

*He has spent 27 years as a Labour councillor for the Ely ward and during the Ely riots pictured on national television, he and his ward colleague Bob Morgan could be seen doing their best to calm the situation at great personal risk. His dedication to ward work is legendary and is reflected in his vote at election times.*

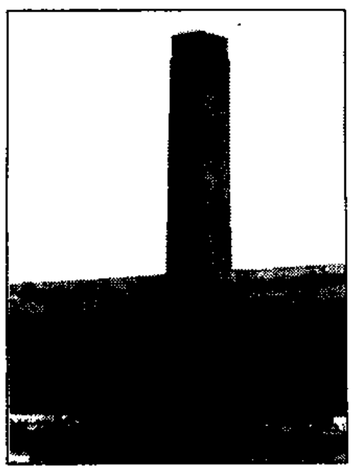
*He has supported many campaigns, local and national, and was a major force in highlighting the injustice done to Dic Penderyn with a national day of remembrance on 13 August. He was also one of the Cardiff Eight expelled from the Labour Group for disagreeing with the sharp rise in councillors' allowances in Cardiff (Eyes passim) — a difficult position given that the lord mayor is his ward colleague.*

*He wrote to Gaddafi to publicly (but ill-advisedly) highlight a serious economic problem in Cardiff West. There is a huge derelict site at the south of his ward that has been a major employment source for Cardiff West since 1860 but the closure of Arjo Wiggins has hit a deprived area hard and Charlie has written to half the planet to try and bring in employment to his constituents.*

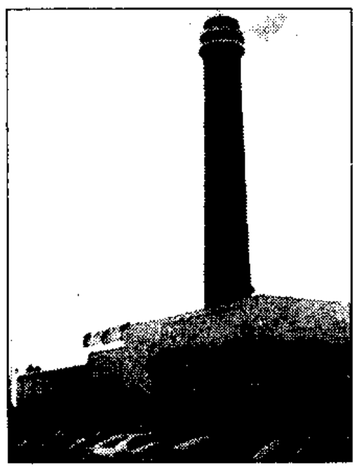
*Yours (but still a fan),*
*CLLR PAUL MITCHELL,*

*Cardiff.*

## Lookalike



**Ikea, Croydon**



**Tate Modern**

*Sir,*

*I thought your readers would be interested in the enclosed Lookalike.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*CHRISTOPHER HOLDEN,*

*London W4.*

## Hair shirt time

*Sir,*

*I write with reference to the article in the 14 July issue entitled Errors of Judgment (Rotten Boroughs column).*

*I wish to make it clear that, although severely follically-challenged, I certainly do not have a pony-tail. If only!*

*Yours faithfully,*
*COUNCILLOR PETER BOX,*

*Leader, City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.*

## Not in clover

*Sir,*

*Gumboot informs us that the adoption of a "miracle plant" (red clover) will take us back to the halcyon days of the 1940s, when it was popular, and farming thus miraculous, weed-free and simple.*

*Oh, and of course organic, since we hadn't yet invented all of these chemicals. The hordes of agricultural workers employed at the time clearly had nothing to do except sit around and watch the crops grow. I don't think so.*

*The low productivity of farming systems at that time led to over a decade of food rationing, extending well beyond the end of World War II.*

*The advent of, er, selective herbicides, which were a boon to the farmers then, because they controlled the weeds which didn't exist, because of the red clover (ahem), allowed the establishment of reliable food production systems. Organic farming was thus abandoned because it failed to feed a population which has since increased by a third. It therefore is not the future, but a repeat of the failures of the past.*

*Yours, lacking misty-eyed romanticism,*
*JIM DIMMOCK,*

*Via e-mail.*

## Colemanballs

*£10 paid for contributions*

*"Well, we wrote this song – but it didn't have any words or a melody."*
**ROBBIE WILLIAMS, SMTV Live**
(Laura Gill)

*"The amputees' championship is coming off soon..."*
**PETER ALLIS, BBC1**
(Frank Naylor)

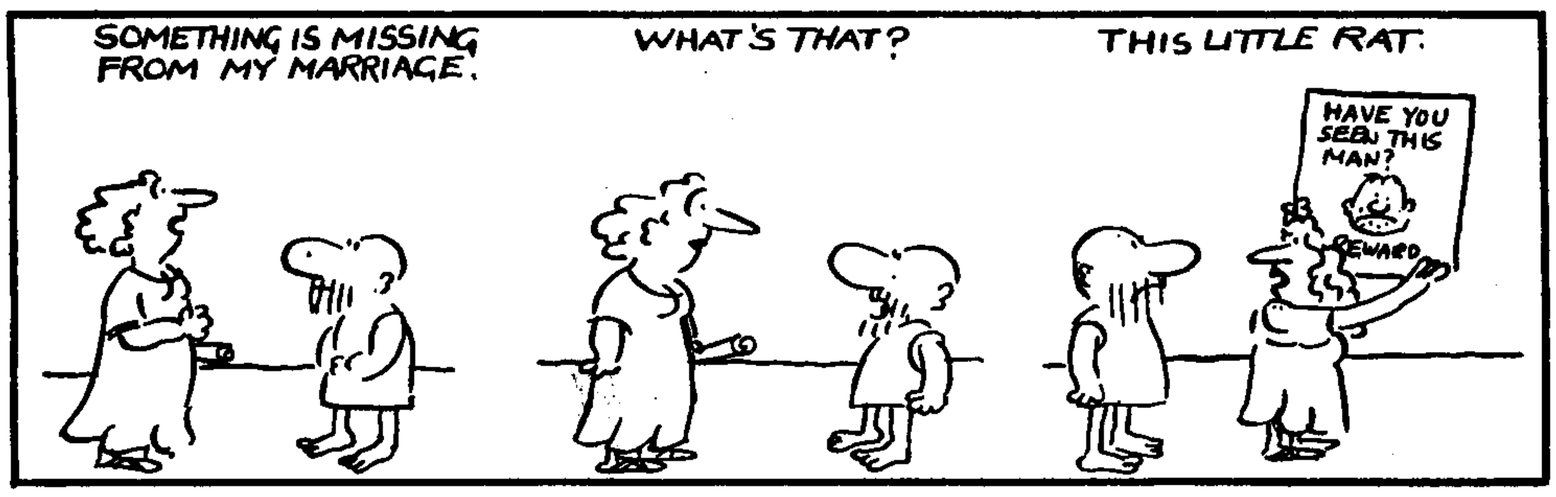
*"Sniffer dogs are scouring Victoria station with a fine tooth comb."*
**ANTHONY BURLEIGH, ITV Radio News**
(Frank Finch)

*"So you've nailed your mast to Gazza..."*
**Reporter, Radio 5**
(D Scholey)

*"Michael Johnson is the greatest athlete since sliced bread."*
**CYRIL REGIS, Radio 5 Live**
(Paul Palmer)

## HOM SAP

AUSTIN




## Letter from **Gaza**

*from Our Own Correspondent*

**IT WAS with some pride that we watched Yasir Arafat, our diminutive leader for the past generation, stand up to the machinations of President Clinton and Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister, at last month's failed peace summit at Camp David. While the talks failed to produce a settlement, the way in which the process unfolded at least gave us some clues as to the direction in which our as yet undeclared Palestinian state will go, and who is likely to be running things.**

There at the side of the three great statesmen in the carefully choreographed, apparently impromptu photocall, was Abu Fadi Muhammed Dahlan, the suave, urbane thirtysomething who looks after what the Palestinian Authority, the stunted semi-state that is all we have to show for six years of negotiations, calls "preventive security" in the Gaza Strip.

Sometime youth activist, media savvy with a smile brilliant enough to rival Julio Iglesias but a temper that would put Al Capone to shame, Dahlan is gunning for the top. His prospects seem to be improving all the time.

For out of the picture – quite literally – at Camp David were all the useless old guard gunmen with whom our frail and ageing leader used to surround himself: men like Abu Mazen or Abu Alaa. After a lifetime of waiting in the wings, the best they can now hope for is to keep the throne warm for a year or two, should Chairman Arafat pop his clogs before our new hero is ready to assume his mantle.

Dahlan is already the real power in Gaza, the shabby affront to human dignity where more than a million of us crowd into putrid refugee camps and fly blown towns, surrounded by barbed wire and minefields, jammed between Israel and Egypt, topped, tailed and stuffed by Jewish settlements.

But there are those among us who fear that, with a motley collection of thugs that is the envy of our eight other security organisations, really he is keeping a lid on our mounting frustration not out of love for Palestine but on behalf of Israel and the United States and the CIA. It was Dahlan's boys, after all, who nailed Muhammed Deif, the Hamas bombmaker, back in May in a house in Gaza City.

Dahlan also has a lucrative sideline running a security company escorting vehicles that deliver cash to banks. And, as the more foolhardy in our business community have learnt to their cost, it's best not to dispense with such protection, for fear that your armoured car might be robbed.

For in Gaza there is precious little cause to be hopeful about the future. Our leaders have allowed several hundred weirdos and extremists, otherwise masquerading as Jewish settlers, to apply for Palestinian passports. If granted, that would allow them to hold on to the 40 percent of Gaza territory which they now control.

In return we get to keep being treated like livestock. True, Kfar Darom, Gush Katif and Netzarim offer some interesting real estate possibilities, on the assumption that the settlers won't be too enamoured at having to salute the Palestinian flag. But one wonders who will be first out of the blocks when it comes to claiming all those nice, fake red-tiled bijou residences that sit in the middle of Gaza. Not those closest to the negotiations surely?

Our real mistake is to be mired here in Gaza. There in the West Bank, the other portion of our benighted homeland, Ramallah is booming, as Palestinians from Detroit and Toronto build themselves a nest in a vain attempt to keep their children in touch with their roots.

And our brothers in Jerusalem, ownership over which brought down the Camp David talks, are quietly appalled by the prospect, should peace one day dawn, that they might lose their rights to the lucrative Israeli job market and the attendant social security and medical benefits. And every other Palestinian in the West Bank can for the moment at least dive across the border to find work.

We, meanwhile, are stuck here like cattle and have to apply to our own security services and the Israelis before we can move. At least the poor bastards stuck in Lebanon these past 50 years are looking at some compensation and, rumour has it, a Canadian passport. Welcome to Palestine!

# FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

**O "We are still awaiting the official report from the management of the Zambia International Trade Fair," Commerce Deputy Minister Chibamba told the Parliament in Lusaka, "and it would be wrong for me to act before I receive their judgement. But believe me, we shall establish who are the culprits in this matter, of that there is no doubt. And those who sold us the helium will be brought to justice."**

**Mr Chibamba then recalled the embarrassment he had felt, after the disastrous opening of this year's ZITF show. "A huge crowd had gathered to watch our beloved President Chiluba and Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius, as they officially opened the show. As they cut the ribbon, ten thousand helium-filled balloons were released above their heads, and were supposed to ascend heavenwards, as a symbol of the excellent relations between our two countries. But instead, they all dropped to the ground, and the two statesmen disappeared from view for several minutes beneath a cascade of balloons. The Mauritian delegation took it badly, and left for the airport shortly afterwards, and it must be acknowledged that relations between our two countries have suffered a severe setback. I do not wish to pre-empt the official report, but it seems probable to me that the helium which this government bought in good faith was not of the very highest quality. Indeed, I fear it may not even have been genuine helium at all."** *(Times of Zambia, 4/7/00. Spotter: "Bwana" Ben)*

—O—

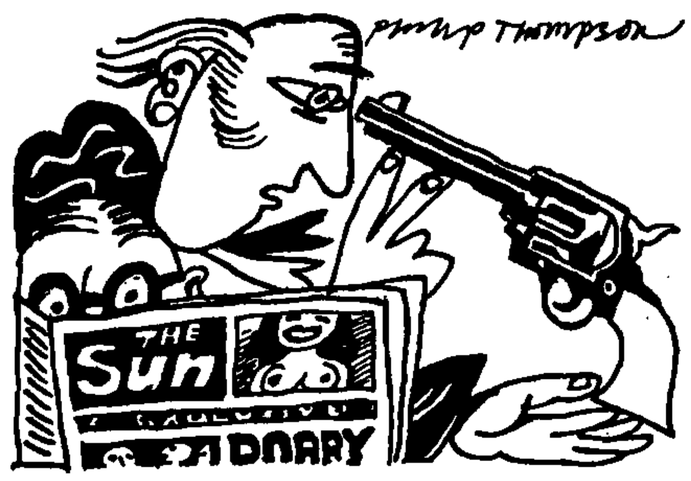
O "This ruling is discriminatory because our obesity is congenital," representatives of the Philippines' twelve thousand overweight policemen told an appeal court in Manila. "It is impossible for us to slim down to the required size, so we should be exempted from this new legislation on grounds of compassion and heredity."

The obese policemen (who all have waistlines in excess of fifty inches) were appealing against a ruling brought in three months previously by Philippine National Police Chief Panfilo Lacson Jr., which decreed that no policeman should have a waistline bigger than thirty-four inches. "They should sweat it out instead of complaining" Lacson told the court in reply. "They have to exert effort to lose weight. When I took over the force, more than half of my officers were seriously overweight, and 11% were clinically obese. Fat officers do much less work than those who have trimmed down, and their lack of exercise makes them prone to heart failure. From January to June last year, 149 obese policemen died due to cardiac arrest, most of them in their sleep. We do not want to lose more pot-bellied officers to such senseless deaths. And anyway, their uniforms are much more expensive, because they need much more cloth. Chief Superintendent Charlemagne Alejandrino of Quezon has reduced his waistline from 57 inches to 33.5 inches in just three months, mainly by having his jaw wired. So if he can do it, so can they."

The court upheld the ruling. *(Arab News, 12/7/00. Spotter: Neil Russell-Bates)*

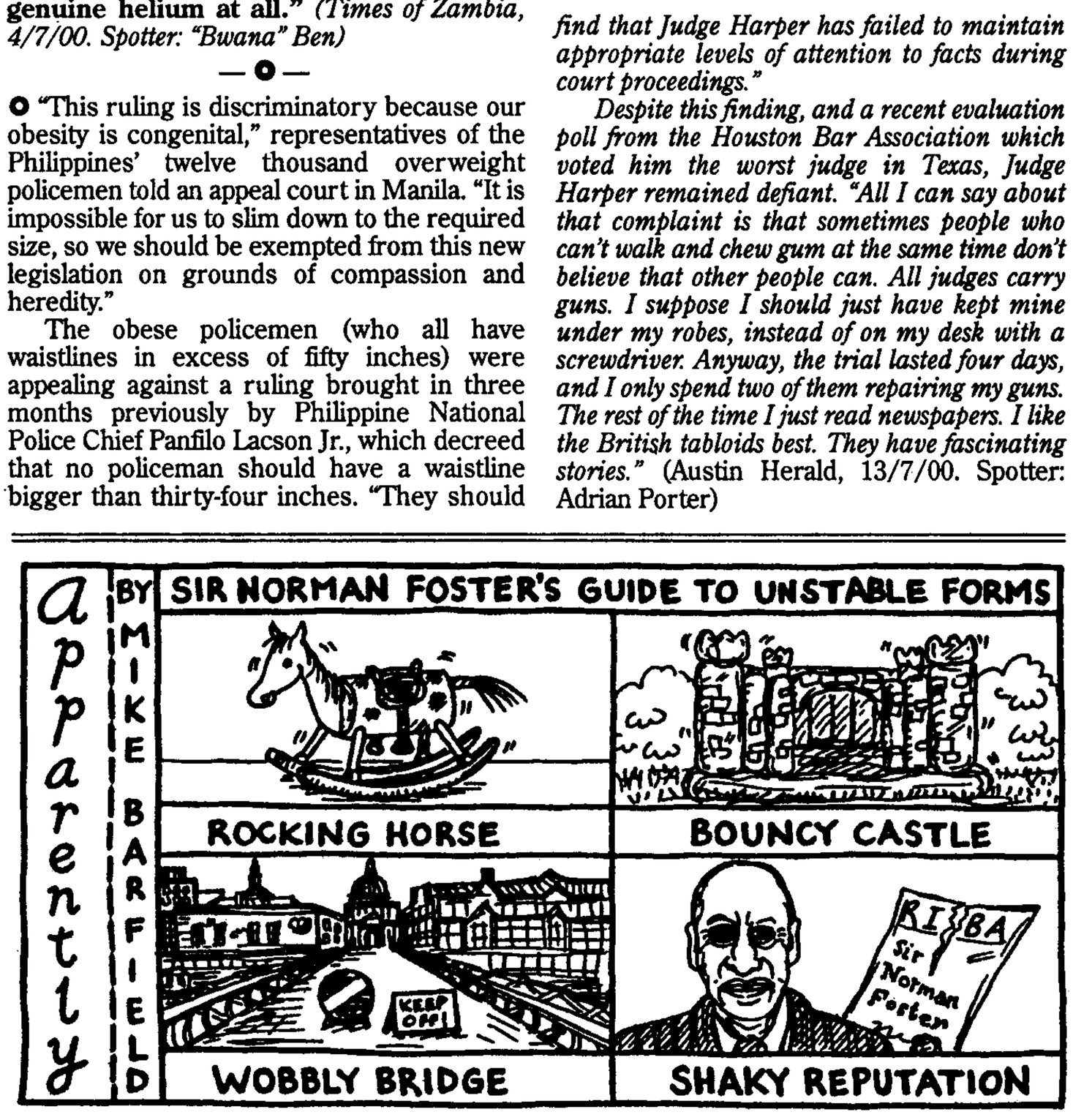
—O—

O *"We find that District Judge H. Lon Harper failed to act in a dignified manner throughout this case," declared the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct, after reviewing his handling of a recent capital murder trial. "Not only did he encourage court officials to read newspapers and magazines during the proceedings, and distribute business cards for his private insurance scheme to all witnesses, but he also spent much of the trial repairing two Colt Model 1873 revolvers, a sight which must surely have unnerved the defendant. In general, we*



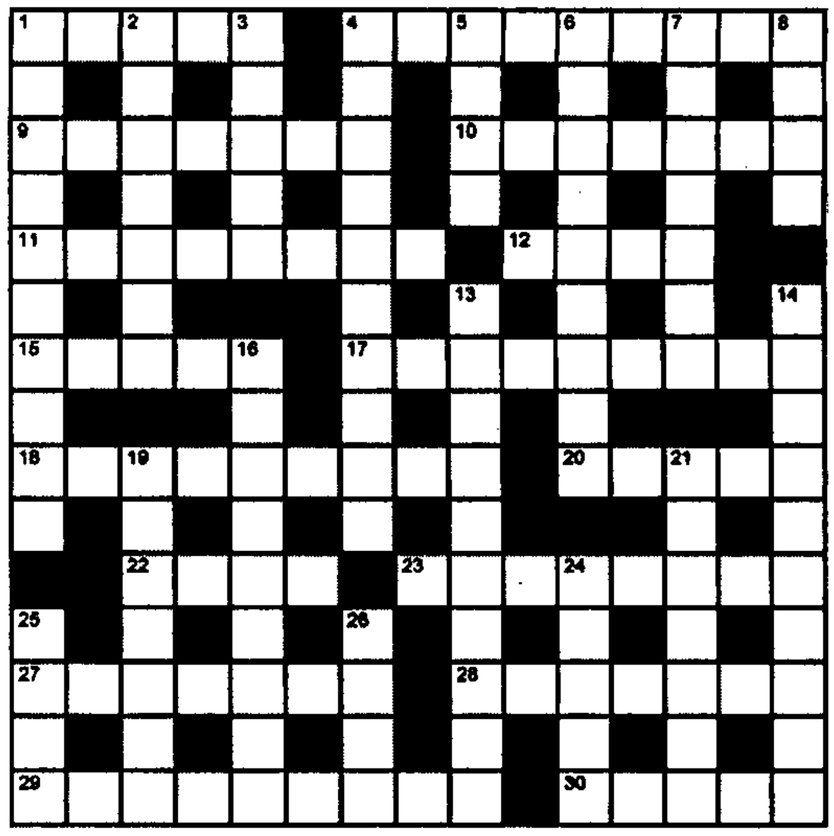

*find that Judge Harper has failed to maintain appropriate levels of attention to facts during court proceedings."*

*Despite this finding, and a recent evaluation poll from the Houston Bar Association which voted him the worst judge in Texas, Judge Harper remained defiant. "All I can say about that complaint is that sometimes people who can't walk and chew gum at the same time don't believe that other people can. All judges carry guns. I suppose I should just have kept mine under my robes, instead of on my desk with a screwdriver. Anyway, the trial lasted four days, and I only spend two of them repairing my guns. The rest of the time I just read newspapers. I like the British tabloids best. They have fascinating stories."* (Austin Herald, 13/7/00. Spotter: Adrian Porter)




# EYE CROSSWORD 163

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 One who backs when one gets leg over (5)
4 Dons monkey suit and does a bit of spin-doctoring? (7,2)
9 Tart offers resistance when embraced by hotshot writer (7)
10 Pollard possesses a hint of one who's been cleared out (7)
11/12 The French figure it's doubly going down (8-4)
12 (see 11)
15/14 Australia was once favoured with tenements all scattered at the interior (5,10)
17 Tending to flow with drink, we hear, this historic UK location (9)
18 Labour success means country on decline! (9)
20 Hard court following earlier (5)
22 Stingy, dominant, privileged US type? (4)
23 Arse about with a sickbed (8)
27 Commonplace stink associated with strike (7)
28 Former Beatle's hit single is ahead of *Enigma Variations* (7)
29 Ring joker on the party most likely to succeed? (9)
30 Agreeable way in which to take a piss (5)

DOWN

1 One gets mother second computer – brings a lump to the throat (5,5)
2 Old European misplaced anger about tax haven (7)
3 State of Lewinsky's final note after Clinton's endless erection (5)
4 Penis getting soft in city abroad – mounted, he took to pinching (4,6)
5 PM eventually forced to resign – it's heavenly! (4)
6 You'd be gutted to have this in corporate terms (5,4)
7 Les, excited, about to breathe heavily ... gets limp (7)
8 Simple, bargain accommodation for working-class type (4)
13 Nixon ate an assortment – a habit of Hitler (10)
14 (see 15)
16 *Carry On Jack* – that would be unbearable! (4,5)
19 Hacks virgin Bob to pieces (7)
21 Somewhat narrow-minded if I censor an erection? (7)
24 Linesman's stake-out (5)
25 I do declare Bob started as a compulsive captain (4)
26 Sticks up for content to an annoying degree (4)

**£100 prize to first solution opened on 18.8.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.**

## Solution to Crossword No. 162

**Winner: T.C. WOODS**

ACROSS: 1 Lump sum 5 Deposit 9 Curse 10 Newsflash 11 Majesty 12/22 Rosetta Stone 13 Annual report 16 Madam speaker 21 Upstage 24 Orestes 25 Go over big 26 Santa 27 Dressed 28 Nutcase.

DOWN: 1 Locums 2 Marijuana 3 Stetson 4 Moneybags 5 Dewar 6 Puffs up 7 Shaft 8 Tehran 14 Reed-organ 15 Ruritania 17 Amadeus 18 Knesset 19 Bugged 20 Estate 22 (see 12) 23 Embed.

# GLENDA SLAGG

***The Graduate who bares all!!!***

**HATS AND KNICKERS off to Jerry Hall, the Leggy Lovely from the Lone Star State!!!?! What an inspiring message to all the middle-aged mums of Britain – Get your kit off and show us what you've got!! It must make Mick rue the day he traded you in for some teenage airhead!?! Hall together now (Geddit???) Thank you Jerry Much!?!?! (Geddit??!?!)**

COR BLIMEY what a sight!!?! Jerry Hall in the Hall-Together (Geddit??!?!) What does she think she looks like standin' starkers on a West End stage??!? At her age, I ask you!?!?! Even 20 seconds is far too long. I've seen a sexier frozen chicken in the ice cabinet at Tesco's, lady – no offence!?!?!

Streuth??!? No wonder Mick ditched you, and went off with a younger model!?!?! Geddit!??!?

*BEEN WATCHING Big Brother on the telly!?? Nor me!! What a lot of complete rubbish!?!? I thought they shouldn't have got rid of Sada quite so quickly – just because she does Yoga – and I quite like the one with the shaved head. What a terrific programme – I'm its number one fan!!?!?!*

HERE THEY are, Glenda's Holiday Hunks!?!?!

**BRIAN LARA**!?!? He knows how to stay in for a long time??!?! (Geddit???)

**HUMPHREY CARPENTER!?** They call him Mr Satire??? I'll give him something to smile about!?!?! (Geddit??!?)

**CHARLES SAUMAREZ-SMITH** – Crazy name, crazy Director of the National Portrait Gallery!?!?!?!

***Byeeeeeee!!?!???!***

# Traditional Wedding Rhymes No. 94

**Something Old Labour**
**Something New Labour**
**Something Borrowed from the Tories**
**Something Blue (suit).**

# THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

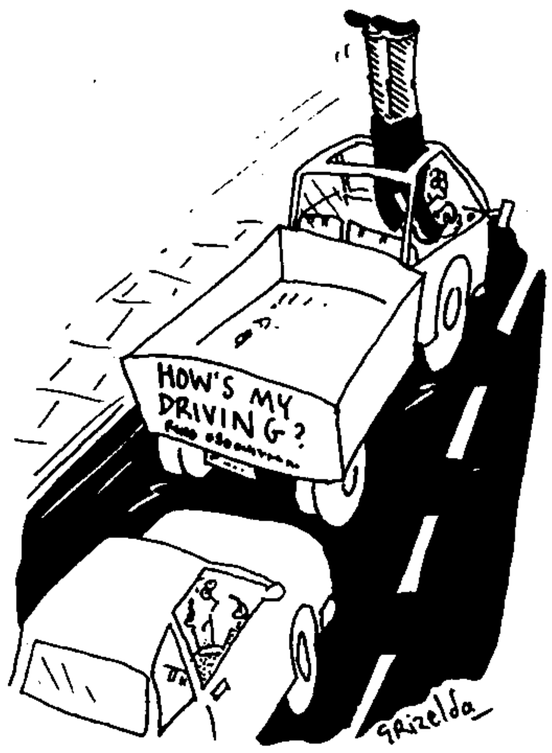
**Dave Spart**, Professor of Ideological and Semiological Entymology at the University of Barking (formerly Tower Hamlets Polytechnic)

**Er... the sickening sycophancy that has subsumed the entire media press and the media er... on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the so-called Queen Mother is totally sickening what has this toothless old parasite in a flowery hat ever done for the starving people of Rwanda, let alone the millions of people in this country who are officially below the poverty line er... this decrepit old harridan (incidentally a known fascist) totally symbolises the outmoded crumbling and totally decadent institution that is the Royal Family, ie the Monarchy, as no less an authority than Julie Burchill has pointed out "what a fat old bag" and as Tom Paine in his seminal piece in the Guardian last week observed "I hate** *(cont. p. 94)*

This piece is reprinted by kind permission of the New Statesman Blind Trust, prop. G. Robinson, a totally sickening corrupt capitalist who pays our wages. *(Surely shome mishtake? Ed.)*

Then she read about Heather Mills, the model who lost a leg in a police bike smash but rebuilt her life with a TV career and the love of Beatles legend Sir Paul McCartney.

*News of the World*




# POETRY CORNER

**In Memoriam**

So Farewell
Sir Alec Guinness.
Star of
Star Wars.

Obi-Wan
Kenobi.
That was your
Character.

You were
Brilliant.

Keith's mum
Said you
Did some other
Films as
Well.

But unfortunately
I never
Saw them.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

**Sheridan Borley writes:**
He was the last of the great acting giants. He seemed to come from another more heroic age where actors learned their craft in the provincial reps and then moved to grace the West End stage. Sir Alec Gielgud *(Take in my last obituary. Thanks. S.B.)*

# News In Brief

Computer games linked to violence **3**

Pope is a Catholic **4**

Bears defecate in woods **5**

'A' Level standards have fallen **94**

*(That's enough shocking new reports. Ed.)*

# ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

*Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)*

Hullo!

Or should I say "Salve!", as I am writing to you this week from the wonderful olive groves of the Palazzo Splendido, the delightful little 200-bedroom villa which Cherie, I and the kids have been lucky enough to be lent by our very good friend Count Fribi.

Since we came out here, I have had a lot of time to reflect on some of the deeper moral challenges that confront us all in these confused times. And one of these, obviously, is the issue of my photograph.

I know everyone wants to take my picture, and that is perfectly understandable, considering how important I am!

But there are times, surely, when all of us have the right not to have our picture taken!

And one such occasion was the recent christening of baby Leo which was a very private event to mark the occasion of our son's public welcome into the parish community.

And what happened? Even though we had specifically asked for everyone to respect our privacy, there the next morning on the front page of the St Albion's Clarion was a large photograph of yours truly posing for the camera with baby Leo.

At first, Cherie and I were deeply upset. She even suggested ringing up one of her friends who is a judge, to see if somebody could be put in prison!

Mr Campbell was so angry that he suggested that this year none of our holiday snaps should be published in the parish magazine, as a way of letting people know just how determined we are to keep out of the public eye!

But no! Wiser counsels (ie, mine) prevailed. Nothing is gained by being vindictive. As it says in the Good Book, "Turn the other cheek towards the camera" (St Paul's Letter To The Paparazzionians).

So that is why, when we arrived in Italy, I very reluctantly invited several hundred photographers to take whatever pictures they like, and Mr Campbell has said that he will publish the best of them to go alongside this letter!

But really we must move on to more serious matters. Goodness me, wouldn't it be a pretty silly waste of time if the only thing I managed to write about in this letter was people taking pictures of me and my family!

Ciao!

Tony

## *Wedding Bells (At Last!)*

Our warmest congratulations to Gordon and Sarah for at last having the decency to tie the knot! I must admit most of us had long since given up hope that the day would ever come, especially when I had read their Banns 349 times! I suppose it is better late than never, and it was right of Gordon not to make a big song and dance about it as if it was a proper wedding. Incidentally, I know that a lot of you, bearing in mind how suddenly it all happened, will be thinking there was something rather fishy about their marriage. But, let me assure you that this wasn't the case! (At least not as far as I know!) T.B.

PS. I am sure that Gordon, being a thrifty Scot, would not wish parishioners to spend their hard-earned savings on giving him a wedding present. Cherie and I certainly won't!

PPS. Cherie and I were not at all offended at not being invited to Gordon's wedding, even though he is our next-door neighbour and a very old friend, and only has his job thanks to me! We were very busy anyway, that day, packing to go on holiday, and even if Gordon had invited us, we would probably have had to decline!

## The Working Men's Club

### *A notice from Mr Prescott*

"The club will be closed during August for essential refurbishment to be carried out at a cost of £100,000. The Secretary's office requires a new carpet in keeping with the status of the Working Men's Club as one of the most historic buildings in the parish (built 1965, snooker room extension added 1982). For anyone who is interested, the carpet is a hand-woven original Axminister showing a pair of Jaguars Rampant above the monogram 'JP' in Argent."

## *Good News!*

**A very warm welcome to young Iva Massow, who has decided to join ou congregation after, as he puts i "seeing the light". Mr Massow's co version is marvellous new particularly since he is exactly the so of person we want at St Albion's – someone who has the courage admit openly that he has a lot money, and is not ashamed of it! T**

## Parish Postbag...

*Dear Sir,*
*No one could accuse me of being prejudiced against any minority, but frankly it makes me sick to see the Vicar welcoming with open arms a self-confessed fox-hunter who admits hangin round in the woods with other men, waiting for*

*Yours sincerely*
*Ken Livingstone, Dunnuthin, Newt Road.*

The Editor reserves the right to all letters from Mr Livingstone reasons of personal dislike.

ADVERTISEMENT

## Are You Shor Of Money?

MANY people are hard-up for cash at this time of year, what with holidays, new car, etc, etc. Now, thanks to the European Court of Human Rights, you can have lots of money simply by suing someone for a breach of your human rights. Because, after all, isn't the right to have lots of money the most basic human right of all?

If you want to know how to turn your human rights into £££££s –

**Contact**
**Mrs Cherie Booth QC**
**(The Vicar's Wife)**
**Matrix House**
**Gold Street.**

*"How do you want your steak – botulism or charcoal-poisoning?"*

Daily Jerrygraph

(formerly the Daily Hurleygraph) Friday, August 11, 2000

# Blonde Woman Takes Off Clothes

**by Our Entire Staff Charles Phwoar**

A TALL blonde woman today took off all her clothes in a London theatre. She stood naked for ten seconds before putting her clothes back on.

## Inside

**Thousands of photos and articles about the tall blonde woman, her ex-husband, their children, his love child, etc, etc, etc.** *Pages 1, 2, 3, 4*

**American actor marries American actress.** *Pages 5, 6, 7, 8*

**Cambridge woman's earring stolen.** *Pages 9, 10, 11, 12*

**(For full story see Cambridge woman's regular weekend column, exclusive to the Daily Germainegraph next Saturday)**

**Pregnant American singer goes swimming. Millions of pics taken by paparazzi of the type the Daily Telephotograph regularly deplores in its editorials.** *Pages 13, 14, 15, 16, 17*

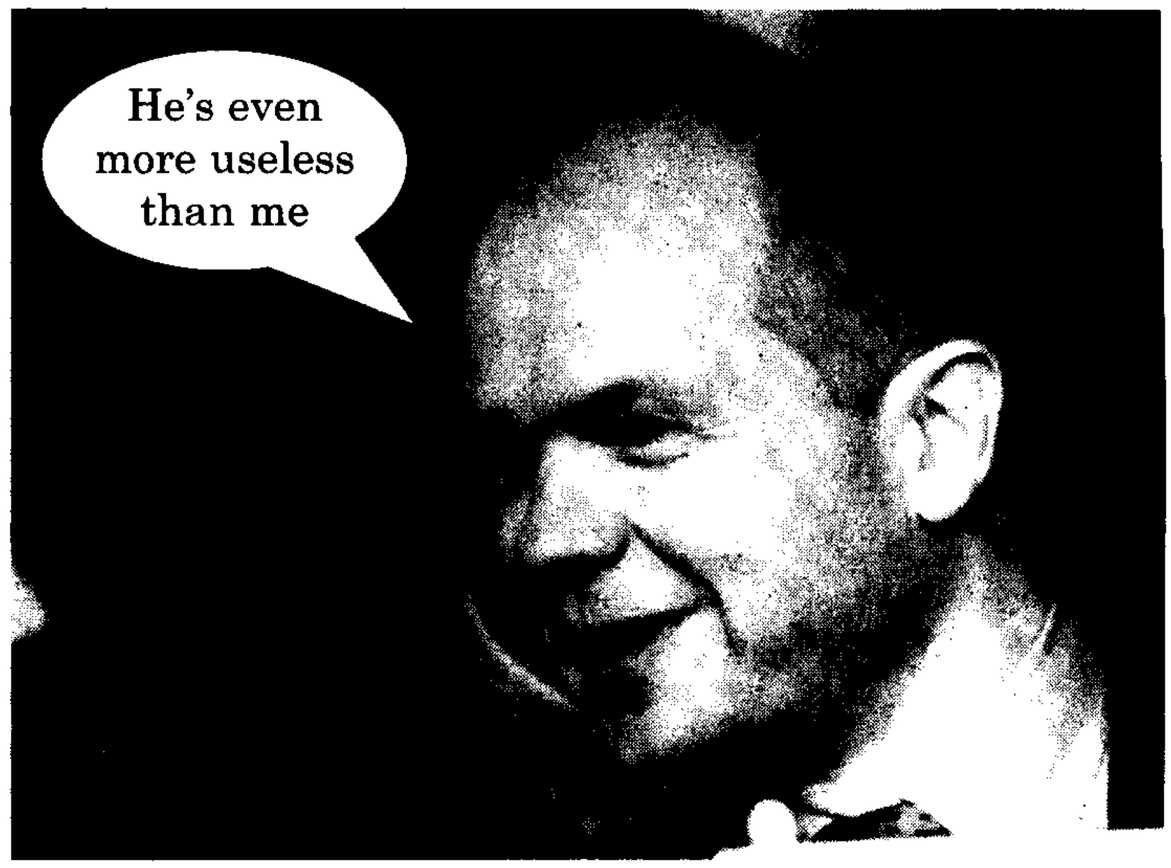
# TONY BLAIR
## An Apology

**IN THE LIGHT of Tony Blair's decision not to allow us to take photographs of his family holidays, we, in common with all other newspapers, may have given the mistaken impression that Blair was a nutty, Howard Hughes-style, privacy-obsessed recluse. A man who is obsessively driven to hide his family away from the understandable desire of the press to share with the Country the Prime Minister's holiday hideaway.**

**We now realise, in light of Tony Blair's decision to allow us to take the photos, that Tony Blair is in fact a shameless publicity-seeking media whore, only too happy to offer up what should be a private family occasion in an obviously pathetic attempt to curry favour with the British press.**

**We would like to apologise for any confusion caused, and apologise in advance for Jason Fraser's charming snaps of Cherie Blair breastfeeding.** *© All Newspapers*

# HAGUE: 'WHY I BACK BUSH'




# HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


LOST WEEKEND BREAK
OH, I DID LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE
*!@!W! !!@! @! *!!
I WANT YOUR PUSSY
WE MUST GET SOME HARD CORE POSTCARDS
HI! I'M ON THE PISS!
THUD! THUD! THUD!
DISCO THUD!
I'M PUTTIN' OFF 'AVIN' A BABY 'TILL I'M FIFTEEN
ASSHOLE!
WANT A SHAG?
FIRE DOWN BELOW
*!! YOU
HE COULDN'T SAY THE LEITH POLICE DISMISSETH US, EVEN IF HE WAS SOBER
THEY'RE PLAYIN' OUR TUNE
O! YOU CAN'T HAVE SEX IN PUBLIC! YOU'RE NOT GAY!
MAYBE WE JUST ARREST THE SOBER ONES
FISH ON ECSTASY
SEE PUNCH-UP AN' JUDY SHOW!
NIC! YOU'RE UUST WANKERS
I MUST GO DOWN TO THE SEA AGAIN TO THE LONELY SEA AND THE SKY. AND ALL I ASK IS A TALL SHIP AND A STAR TO STEER ME BY
HEATH

# EYE 'WRONG' TO NAME AND SHAME REBEKAH

by Our Social Affairs Staff **P.D. O'Phile**

**THE MAGAZINE Private Eye last night came under a storm of censure for publishing a photograph of the notorious editor of the News of the World, Ms Rebekah Wade.**

The police, social workers and probation officers were unanimous in their verdict that Private Eye's "naming and shaming" of Ms Wade had been "irresponsible" and "counter-productive".

A spokesman for the National Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Tabloid Editors, the NSPCTE, said "The results of this publicity-seeking gimmick have been entirely predictable.

## String 'Er Up

"Hysterical mobs of journalists have been combing London to track down this unfortunate woman and subject her to an interview.

"And now, totally predictably, this dangerous woman has gone to ground so that she can pursue her revolting activities incognito."

# LATE NEWS

**THE EYE last night agreed to call off its "naming and shaming" policy following representations from the authorities.**

Said a spokesman for the Eye, "This is what we wanted all along. We have now forced the Government to introduce legislation which will enable parents to be warned if the Editor of the News of the World is living in their street. It will be called 'Rebekah's Law'."

## What you won't read in the News of the World

Sexy Rebekah's Love Romps with Soap Star Ross....**not** on page 1

Pix of them semi-naked on the beach by Jason Fraser....**not** on page 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

# POETRY CORNER

**Lines on the retirement of Dame Betty Boothroyd as Speaker of the House of Commons**

So. Farewell then
Betty Boothroyd.
Former Tiller Girl and
First woman
Speaker.

"Order! Order!"
That was your
Catchphrase.

Just as it was of
All the others
Before you.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

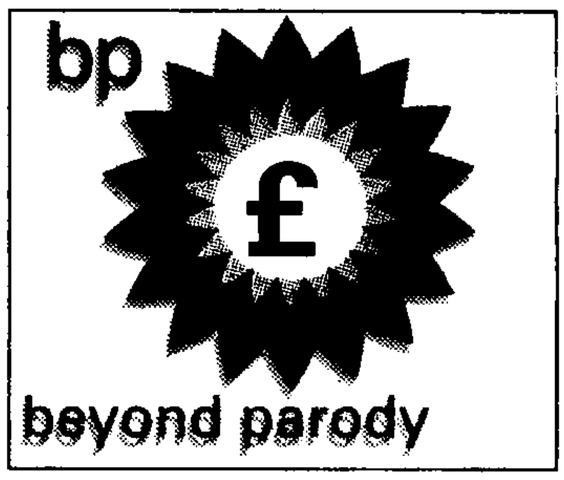
*"Well, Señor and Señora, here's your holiday home for the next fortnight – and please don't worry about the geckos – they're harmless"*

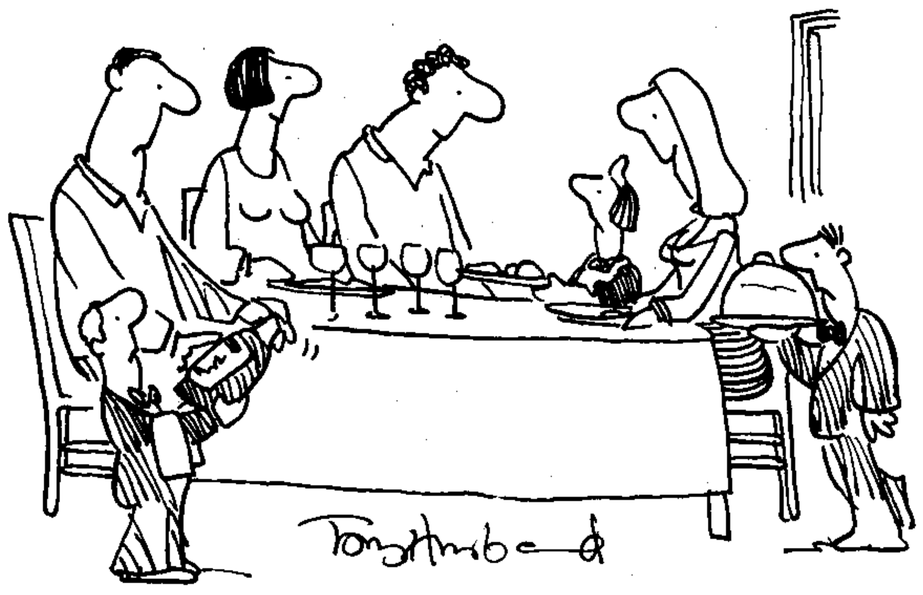
# BP UNVEIL NEW SYMBOL

By Our Design Staff **Christopher Logo**

**BP have unveiled a brand new logo which company chiefs say embodies all that is great and good about the corporation.**

A spokesman for BP explained, "We were looking for a design that captures the very essence and flavour of the company. Allied to that, we were keen to promote a dynamic, progressive business philosophy. We're delighted with the results."



*"Oh, for heaven's sake, Henry, why haven't we got our children doing this?"*

HUSBAND

Do you think parents should be allowed to hit their children?
OPINION POLL
Oh Yeah, definitly
OPINION POLL
But not with anythin' with nails in it
OPINION POLL

## TV Highlights

### Secret History: The Battle of Agincourt

**(Channel 4)**

CONTRARY to the widely believed my that this battle in the skies over Ag was won by a few public school-e archers, Channel 4 proves conclu that the toffee-nosed Henry V n lost the whole battle by his sn and in-bred stupidity in refusin the archers to share his tent Battle was only won by a de gay and lesbian bowperso inner cities who *(That's Channel 4. Ed.)*

# "Better Late..."

***A Holiday Romance Special by SYLVIE KRIN, from whose pen flowed such immortal classics as Born To Be Queen, Heir of Sorrows, and Never Too Old***

"DO YE twa', Sarah and Gordie Brune, swear agang the Holy Buke that ye will fasten the knot betwixt ye, never to be riven asunder?"

The solemn tomes of the severe Presbyterian deaconess, the Rev. Kirsty McThirsty, rang out across the oak-panelled lounge of Drambuie Manse, the ancient granite-walled home of the Brown family.

Sarah's heart swelled with joy beneath her ivory Nomura silk wedding suit, and a perfectly-formed tear trickled down the peach-like softness of her damask cheek.

Although on the surface Sarah appeared to be a tough, abrasive career woman in the no-nonsense world of public relations, today she was just like any other young girl who has finally achieved her life's dream.

And now the great day was here at last. Not quite in the way she had dreamed of perhaps. There were no church bells chiming their message of joy to the world.

There was no pink-ribboned vintage Rolls Royce to sweep off the bridal pair to a magnificent reception attended by thousands of guests...

Still, the main thing was that she and her beloved Gordon were at last to be made one. And wasn't this simple ceremony, witnessed only by Gordon's political adviser Mr Balls, his wife Mrs Balls, and a handful of Gordie's relatives, in its own way just as moving?

"I noo pronounce ye man and wife. You may noo kiss the bride, Mr Brune."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, his face reddening with unaccustomed embarrassment, placed a nervous kiss on his new bride's perfectly-formed damask *(Get on with it. Ed)*

"At last," thought Sarah, "at last, at last, at last..."

"...At last!" exclaimed the dour Auchtermuchty Council official, Gordon's brother Hamish, "I thought the drinks would never come."

They each clutched their thimble-sized glasses of celebratory McSainsbury's champagne.

"I thought we'd have to wait six years for these wee drammies to arrive as well," joked Gordie's cousin Dougal, a much-respected accountant from the remote Highland community of Glen Campbell.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" Sarah joined in the laughter. After all, she could afford now to make light of the six long years she had been waiting for Gordon to pop the question she had yearned to hear. Years when Gordon had seemed more interested in abolishing the Married Person's Allowance than in becoming a married person himself.

Years when he had been more concerned with those beastly Treasury figures than in the perfectly-formed figure of his faithful fiancée.

"Raise your glasses," cried the kilted figure of Gordon's uncle Donald, a retired bank manager from the tiny Hebridean island of Isa, "and then we can let the bonnie couple gang awa' on their honeymoon..."

"...The honeymoon, thought Sarah, as she came down the stairs, carrying her David Ginola travel bag. Where is Gordon taking me? He still hadn't told her.

Downstairs all the guests had departed, leaving behind only the faintest aroma from the now almost empty bottle of champagne.

It was then that she heard voices from behind the door of the adjoining kitchen. Mr Balls was talking to Gordon, excitedly.

"We've done it, Gordon, we've done it! The last piece of the jigsaw is now in place!"

She heard Gordon giving a throaty chuckle of agreement. What "jigsaw" was this? What "last piece" were they talking about?

Sarah's heart fluttered like a moth caught in a spider's web.

"You've got the economy working. Now you've given away billions to the public services. You've got Blair on the ropes. And now you've done the most difficult bit of all, you've got married.

"From now on, it's 'family man Gordon'. You'll be standing outside Number 10 clutching your own wife and kiddies' mug and your own baby Leo before you know it. So smile, Gordie. It's in the bag!"

Sarah's blood ran cold. Was that it? Just "a piece in a jigsaw..."

ROY of the ROVERS
THE FOOTBALL SEASON IS ONLY WEEKS AWAY...
WELCOME BACK ROY! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
WINDSURFING? HANG-GLIDING? BUNGEE JUMPING?
NO, A PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY
COME ON YOU RED CROSS!
COOPER

# SPEAKER FEVER MOUNTS

by Our Parliamentary Staff
**Conrad Blackrod** and **John Serjeant-At-Arms**

**MILLIONS more MPs last night threw their hats into the ring for the chance to succeed Betty Boothroyd as Speaker of the House of Commons.**

Front-runners for the most prestigious job in British politics include:

● **Sir Mingie McThingie**, 89-year-old veteran Lib Dem MP who has represented the three voters of the island of Dhull for the past 200 years. Immensely popular, McThingie commands respect on all sides of the House.

● **Sir Bormack McCormack**, 98-year-old veteran Tory MP who has represented the safe Conservative seat of Mouldbridge since 1632. Immensely pompous, Sir Bormack commands enormous sleep on all sides of the house.

● **Gwyneth Deadwoody**, 104-year-old veteran Labour MP who has represented the safe Labour seat of Hovis North since the Peasants Revolt of 1381. Respectably immense, she commands large gins and tonics in all bars of the House.

● **Tony Wedgwood-Loon**, 128-year-old veteran Socialist MP who has represented himself in Parliament since the dawn of time. Immensely mad, Loon commands huge mugs of tea to be brought to him at all hours of the day and night.

## WHO DO *YOU* WANT TO BE SPEAKER???

Your chance to "order, order" up the political elder statesman of your choice:

- TV's David Jason
- TV's Frank Bruno
- TV's Carole Vorderman
- TV's Inspector Morse
- TV's Sir David Frost
- TV's Joanna Lumley
- TV's Barry Norman
- TV's Princess Anne

☆ ***Winner gets a free flight on Concorde***

*"You say the victim was attacked with a bread-knife..."*

Friday
August 11
2000

*The* **Grauniad**

# Hague rocked as top Tory quits

**Our Political Staff**
**Alastair Campbell**

THE political world was rocked to its foundations last night when one of William Hague's top aides defected to the Labour Party.

The Tory Party was brought to the edge of extinction by the news that Ivan Whohe, described by himself as "one of Mr Hague's closest friends and advisers," had decided to join New Labour.

As a master of foxhounds, Mr Whohe said "The Labour Party now stands for everything I have fought for in my political career." But ashen-faced senior Tories were trying to remember *(cont'd. p. 94)*

Mr Whohe, who describes himself as a homosexual, millionaire and life-long self-publicist *(Surely "Conservative"? Ed.)* announced that he had been shocked to discover recently that William Hague held "right-wing views".

"I was appalled," he told reporters. "William Hague is not the kind of compassionate Conservative that used to run the Tory party. Whatever happened to people like Mrs Thatcher and Norman Tebbit?"

There is no doubt that the loss of Mr Whohe represents catastrophe for Hague. If someone so central to the Conservative project as Ivan Whohe has lost faith in it, it suggests that Hague should just give up and advise the rest of his followers to vote Labour.

Not since Judas betrayed *(cont'd. p. 94)*

# GREEDY GOVERNMENT HITS HAULIERS' PROFITS

by Our Transport Correspondent **Phil Emup**

**LORRY drivers have been urged to support a day of protest over charges levied by the Government.**

"A whacking 100% of the fines we pay for smuggling illegal immigrants into this country goes straight into this greedy Government's coffers," said one angry lorry driver being chased at speed by police down the M20. "So in protest for one day only we're urging all truckers not to fill up the backs of their cabs with refugees.

"What sort of a country is it when you can't make a decent living profiteering off the backs of desperate *(cont. p. 94)*

## YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

Nick Serota's got a nerve, saying we're finished as a movement!
It seems installations are old hat, and painting's the thing! huh!
Hi! You wouldn't believe the price of oils nowadays!
Tell me about it!
Does anyone know how to prime canvas?
COWLING AND WILCOX
COWLING AND WILCOX

**FENG SHUI BUDDAH** to attract wealth, approx 25cm high, brand new cost £30 accept £10, no offers first to see will buy, unwanted gift.

*Express & Star, Wolverhampton*

.Monday to Friday from 2-4pm. Come in for a time of quiet, prayer and medication.

*North Church, Perth*

**TUTOR REQUIRED** for 2 hours per week to help 9 and 12 year old with their reding,

*Friday – Ad*

Concorde bodies found, eyes on black box

*Yahoo! News*

What You Won't Read In The Murdoch Press

THE Sun

Friday, August 8, 2000

**There's more fun in the Financial Times**

# IT'S A BSKYB-ALLSUP!!!

**THE big bosses at BSkyB had a real Satte-FRIGHT when the *bad news* was DISHED out to them that they had run-up losses of £262 million last year.**

"They must have been out of their SET TOP boxes," said one worried Sky employee. "This'll mean our bonuses are Mur-DOCKED for sure.

"Sure Rupert loves China – but that didn't mean he wanted us to be in the RED."

## THE SUN SAYS

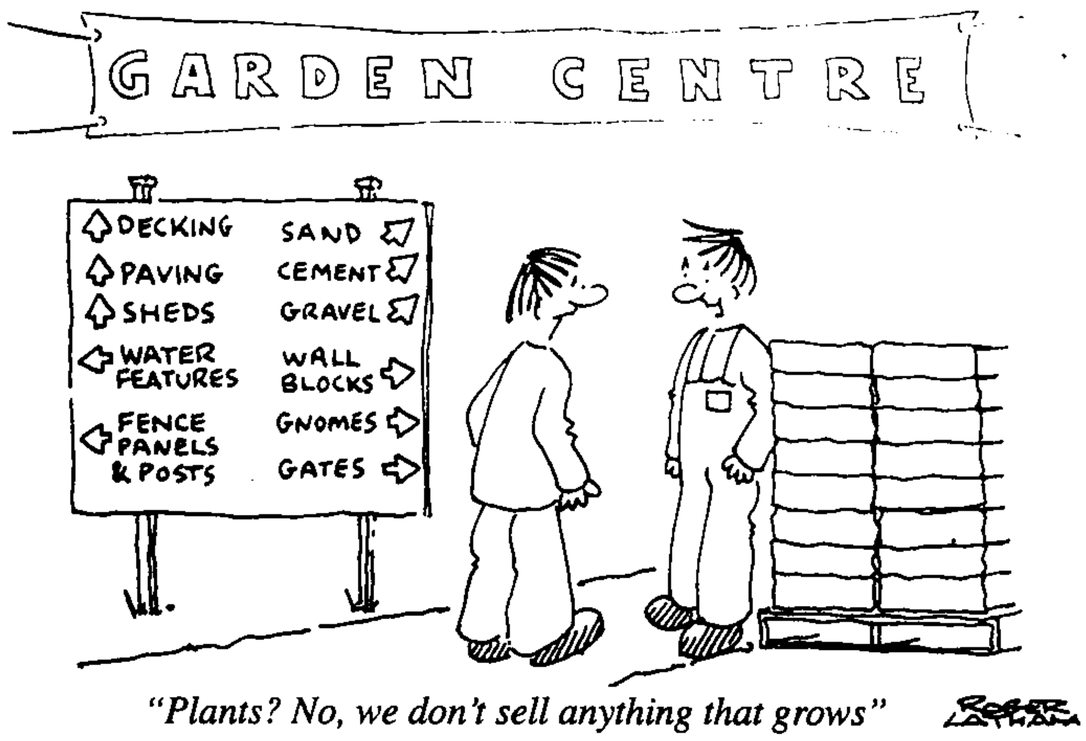
## Sky's The Limit

**THE massive £262 million losses wracked up by BSkyB surely signals the end of the cosy monopoly that is subscription satellite television.**

There is no doubt that the future of broadcasting lies in high quality terrestrial programming paid for by the licence fee... *(You're sacked – Rupert)*

## DUMP THE SUN!!!!!!!

JOIN our campaign to boycott the country's biggest rip-off.
Tell Gordon Brown to tell Rupert Murdoch to pay some tax in Britain
— or we won't buy the overpriced SUN ANY MORE!




*"Plants? No, we don't sell anything that grows"*

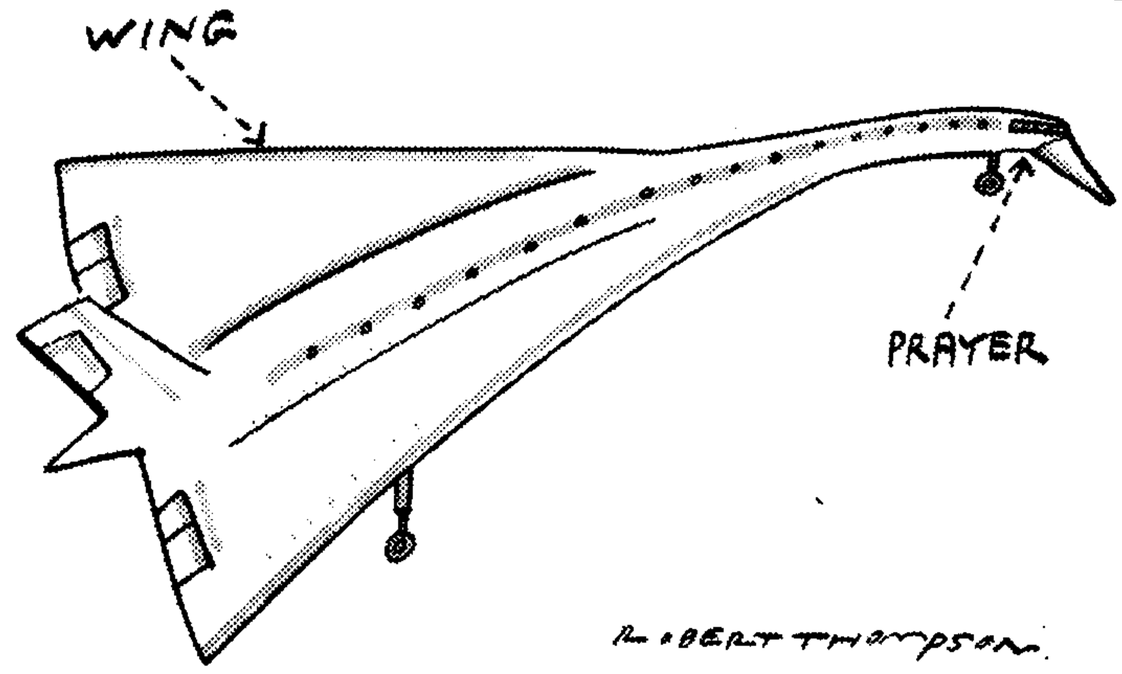
**LIVING COUPLE REQUIRED**

For busy country freehouse near Leeds.

*Advertisement, Yorkshire Post*

**Lee Clifford Bell**, 35, of Bakers Lane, Bury. Attempted to cause criminal damage by head butting the St Andrew's Street South bus shelter.

*Bury Free Press*




CONCORDE – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

# EVERYONE HAS RIGHT TO SUE EVERYONE ELSE

## Shock Court Ruling

by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rosenbeard**

**UNDER a new ruling from the European Court of Human Rights, the "right to sue" has now been indelibly enshrined in British law for the first time.**

A judgement by the 87 judges of the ECHR, representing every country in the Eurovision Song Contest, lays down the "fundamental right of every citizen to sue anyone they want for anything they feel like".

This follows several recent cases referred to the Court, including:

● **Mr X, who sued the British prison authorities for keeping him in gaol after he had admitted murdering his wife. He was awarded £764,000.**

● **Mrs B, who sued the Happy Eater restaurant after she spilled one of their chocolate ice-creams over her new dress. She won £1,212,000.**

● **Mr Y, who sued a well-known shoe manufacturer after he tripped over one of his shoelaces which he had forgotten to tie up, and stubbed his toe. He claimed there should have been a warning notice on the lace. The Court upheld his claim and awarded him £5,264,000.**

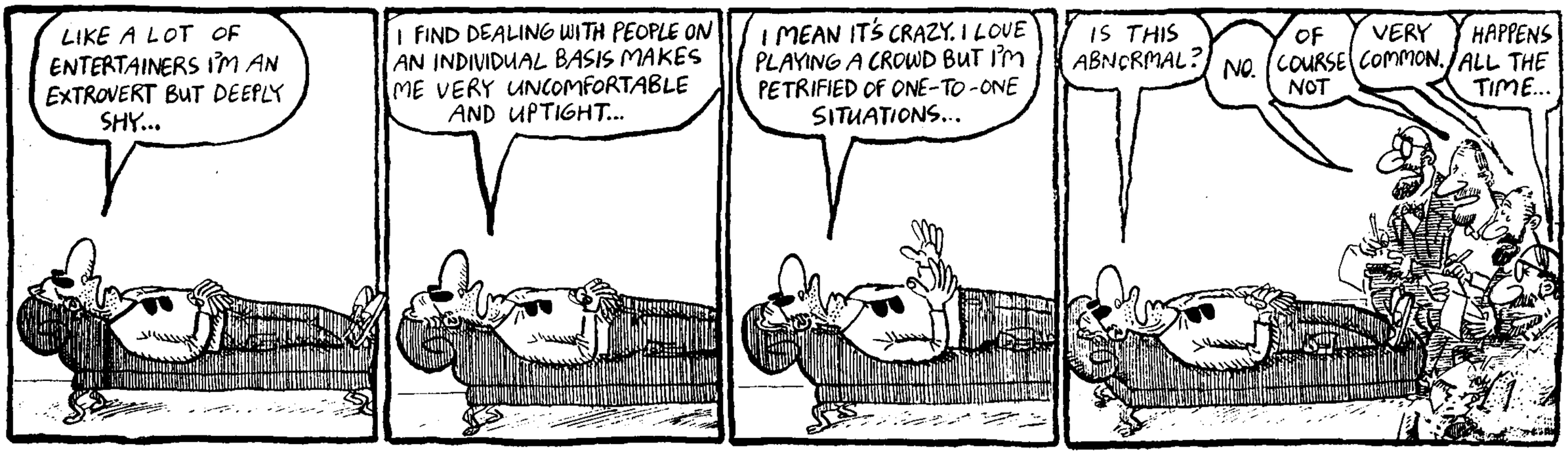
● **Mr P, a middle-aged homosexual, who sued the health service after he failed to become pregnant. The Court found that Mr P had been "discriminated against on grounds of gender" and awarded him £27,416,212.**

● **Miss Z, a teenager, who woke up one morning feeling "unhappy". She sued everyone she had ever known, and the Court awarded her all the money in the world in compensation – except for the amount owing to lawyers in the case which totalled £4.2 trillion for the three-year hearing.**

If you would like to sue under the new Human Writs Act, contact Miss Cherie Booth of Fees-R-Us, c/o 10 Downing Street, London W1.

Celeb

LIGGER


LIKE A LOT OF ENTERTAINERS I'M AN EXTROVERT BUT DEEPLY SHY...
I FIND DEALING WITH PEOPLE ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS MAKES ME VERY UNCOMFORTABLE AND UPTIGHT...
I MEAN IT'S CRAZY. I LOVE PLAYING A CROWD BUT I'M PETRIFIED OF ONE-TO-ONE SITUATIONS...
IS THIS ABNORMAL?
NO.
OF COURSE NOT
VERY COMMON.
HAPPENS ALL THE TIME...

# Literary Review

## Rock and bull stories

### I'm a Man: Sex, Gods and Rock 'n' Roll
Ruth Padel
*(Faber, £12.99)*

*There's a lady who's sure Gary Glitter's a god/and she's buying a stairway to heaven.*

PERHAPS it should be Jagger or Morrison or Hendrix rather than Glitter. But the song remains the same. The ancient Greeks invented music, gods and heroes, and 2,000 years later the whole rock 'n' roll phenomenon was just a cover version. That, in a nutshell, is Padel's millennial thesis. Breathtaking in its simplicity, staggering in its fatuity.

"Rock music is about maleness," she declares, "a mouthpiece for male joy, defiance and need; a mix of emotions which drew... on mythic connections between male sexuality, aggression, anxiety and violence. Connections which, as it happens, are basically Greek." And in ancient Greece, music meant culture, just as it did in the 60s; and myth was all about image and ritual.

And so it goes, with many an erudite reference, the same weight being accorded to Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* as to Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*. Some of the wittiest remarks are actually quotes from rock stars, who as a rule do not take themselves or their profession quite as seriously as Padel. This might belie Frank Zappa's dictum, that rock journalism consists of people who can't write interviewing people who can't talk for the benefit of people who can't read. But in its general tone and style, in its giddy hyperbole, sloppy editing, repetitions, contradictions and errors, it conforms to the generally accepted (low) standard for rock writing.

A good anecdote is always worth a replay. The story of how the Charlatans, having just lost their keyboard player in a car crash, declined to cancel their next gig with the telegraphic "There will be no change. We are fucking rock" is quoted once on page 4 to illustrate the "myth of ferocity" and again on page 112, to illustrate "Homeric group pride" (ie male-bonding, a concept unknown since the Trojan war). To mark the centrality of cock to rock, Padel mentions the Beastie Boys "toting an inflatable penis onstage" on page 167, while on page 178 the group's shows "featured a giant inflatable phallus".

On the subject of roving male infidelity, the lyrics "I'll love them and then I'll leave them, break their hearts and deceive them" of Marvin Gaye's "Wherever I lay my Hat", as sung by Paul Young, are quoted first on page 85 and again, for good measure, on page 121. The same point is illustrated by that famous Beatles' song in which, as sung by Karen Carpenter, "He's got a ticket to ride" – only Padel omits to mention (or simply hasn't noticed) that in the original (and much more interesting) version it was a "she" who had the ticket to ride and didn't care. That, of course, would spoil the thesis.

The problem for little Ruth is that she has spectacularly missed the bandwagon (or tour bus) and no amount of pop anthropology will disguise the fact that she is basically a sort of groupie after the fact, desperate to touch the hems of these heroes' robes, or their long-dead leather trousers. She did not, like the rest of us, grow up to the sound of rock music. She comes to it late in life, at an age when most people have grown out of air-guitar playing or screaming, knicker-wetting fandom; and she comes to it as an academic, seeing it only in superficial or structural terms. She is the classic example of the person who, having to ask, will never truly know.

How did she learn? She explains how she spent a season with Mojo, apparently unaware that this academic monthly is where old *NME* journalists go to die. Tutored by its editors she eventually learned to tell apart the voices of Sting, Paul Simon and Bruce Springsteen. And she read a lot of books and articles, including some of her own (five are listed in the compendious bibliography); and then, just like Salman Rushdie with *his* little book of rock (see *Eye* 974), she delved deep into the myth-kitty, almost to the bottom of the barrel.

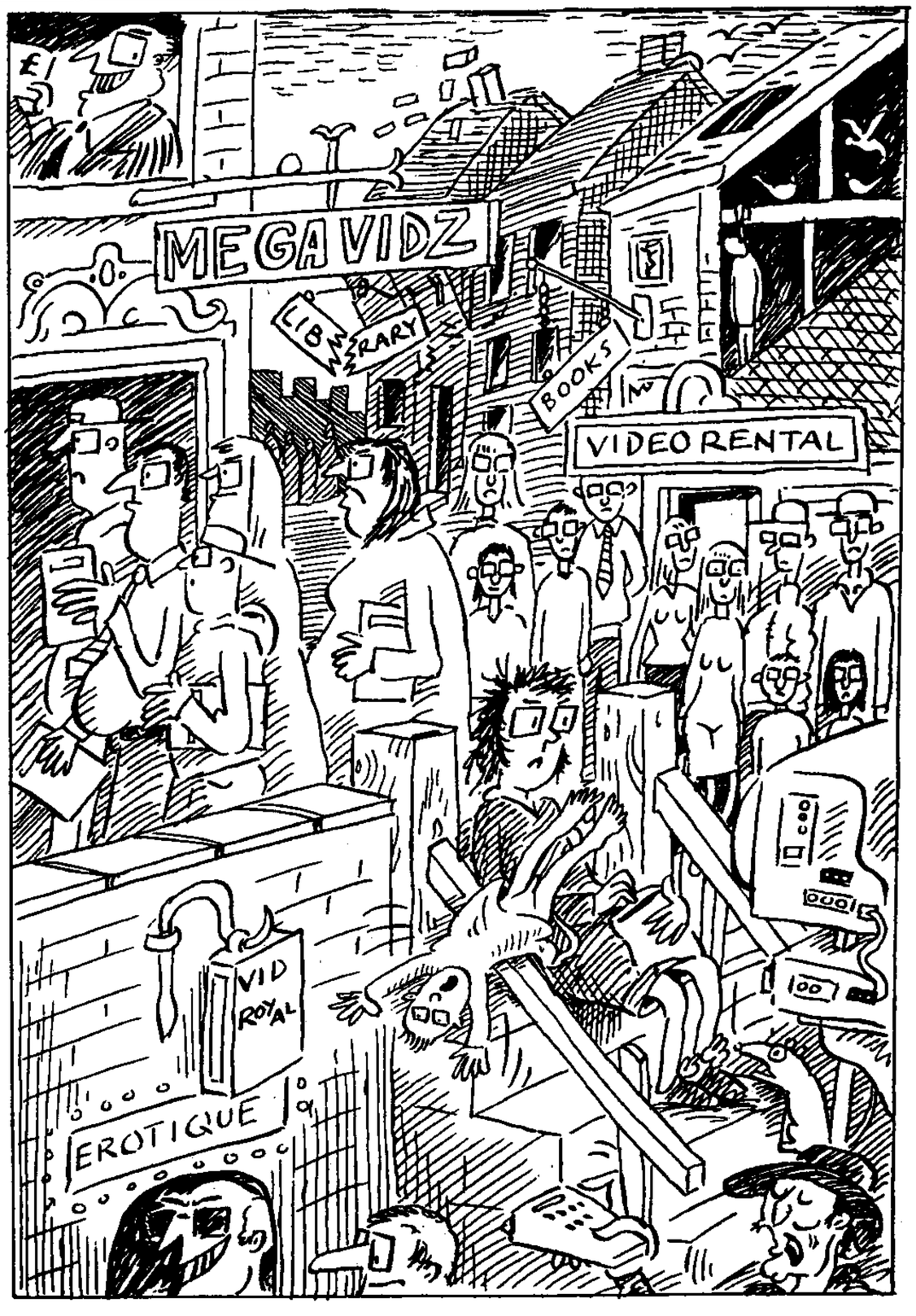
Here is a typical three-chord progression: 1) "Venus [goddess of love] is married to Vulcan... god of flame." 2) "Flames of love power-drive Western love poetry and lovesong from the start." 3) "'C'mon baby,' sings Jim Morrison, 'Light my fire.'"

Or how about this for a mythic connection: "In Greek terms, a hero is a man with a bit of god in him, divinity that flares in heroic daring and the way women kneel over before him. Hendrix was also a world-wide sex symbol, a guitar ejaculating all over the world..." Prometheus stole the fire of the gods and white men stole the blues. Out of penis envy, apparently. And Elvis, of course, was the Pelvis.

You can take this kind of thing anywhere you like, and Ruth Padel goes all the way. Beyond even Mojo's po-mo facetiousness. She actually takes it all quite seriously, producing as a result a sort of Pooter's guide to rock 'n' roll.

Or is it all a spoof? Is it, in fact, a gigantic send-up by an "award-winning poet" smitten with envy at the somewhat greater "potency of cheap music" as a lyric form than, perhaps, her own no doubt worthy offerings?

**Book Street**




**Video Lane**

# Books & Bookmen

■ GRAHAM GREENE once claimed he tried to think of names for his characters that couldn't possibly exist, as it avoided legal trouble. It seems that Zadie Smith and the legal department at Penguin have not been so careful.

In *White Teeth* she writes in not altogether glowing terms about an unbearably smug family of Jewish liberals called the Chalfens, the focus being the son Josh and his desperate attempts to become hip by associating with Smith's multicultural teen rebels Millat and Irie.

An unusual name, so it is interesting to note that Smith was at Cambridge at exactly the same time as a young liberal Jew called, er, Joel Chalfen. Can they be possibly related and if so, what did young Joel do back in university days to deserve *such scathing* quasi-fictional treatment?

■ FORMER Dorling Kindersley boss Peter Kindersley and his son Barnabas featured in a heart-warming interview in the *Sunday Times* Relative Values column on 6 August.

Courting sympathy for the publisher turned organic farmer, the introduction noted that when only three million of a print run of 13 million *Star Wars* books were sold (see *Eyes passim*) £44m was wiped off Kindersley's personal fortune. No mention was made, however, of the £100m Kindersley received from the sale of DK to Pearson, or the resulting loss of 350 full-time staff worldwide.

Barnabas Kindersley completed the picture of his unfortunate dad: "There was a massive amount of hype around *Star Wars*; DK wasn't the only company burnt by it. My dad was very angry, as nobody had told him this huge number of books had been printed." This begs the question what kind of publishing firm keeps its chairman in the dark about a print run of 13 million?

■ PROFILED in a recent *Publishing News*, hack and Maxwell henchman-turned-bookperson John Blake discussed one of the less glorious episodes in Blake Publishing's otherwise illustrious history, which has included such joys as *The Guv'nor*, *Hard Bastards* and the *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Kneecapping*.

The story involved the decision to pull Frank Dobson's (no relation) biography of Naim Atallah-Disgusting, the libidinous and once-bewigged businessman who made such a success of Aspreys the jewellers that it, er, had to be rescued by rival Garrard.

"It was a nightmare," the ageing teenybopper recalled. "To us, it seemed like a good book, but it became too much of a hot potato and went straight on the scrapheap, unfortunately." Well, up to a point. The "scrapheap" in question was Quartet Books (proprietor: N. Atallah-Disgusting), who made Blake an offer he couldn't refuse and quietly buried the book and its unsavoury revelations, much to the chagrin of Dobson.

■ HAVING missed its third projected publication date in a year, many at Little, Brown are wishing that they had never heard of *Bernie's Game*, Terry Lovell's biography of Formula 1 boss Bernie Ecclestone (see *Eyes passim*).

One insider was heard to remark recently that "we're hoping quietly that everyone will just forget that they ever saw it in the catalogue". However, earnest editorial director Alan Samson is not thought to be so willing to let go.

Why has the book still not appeared? Although the publisher has claimed to have received a full manuscript several times in the past, it is not clear how much Lovell has really delivered. Samson has proclaimed that Little, Brown has not been leaned upon by Ecclestone, but is it possible that the faintly sinister friend of Mr Tony has concentrated his leanings on Lovell, making it hard for him to even finish the book?

**Post Modern Pat**
**And His Black And White Mouse**

■ THOUGH he declares an interest, was it entirely proper for Nikolai Tolstoy to review a biography of his late stepfather, the sea-faring novelist Patrick O'Brian, for *Literary Review*?

Tolstoy and other family members either refused or gave only limited assistance to the biography's author, Dean King. In addition, material has clearly been obscured or withheld; and Tolstoy is himself about to publish his own memoir of the great man in which "many of [King's] interpretations will be shown... to be wide of the mark".

In short he appears to be using his review as a spoiler: don't buy this book, wait for mine. Or is one just being paranoid?

■ EARLIER this year the leftie publisher Verso caused quite a stir by announcing that it had commissioned a book exposing what was wrong with the *Guardian*. Now that publication is imminent, however, staff at Verso are curiously muted about it.

The cause of their embarrassment is a contribution from veteran firebrand Tariq Ali. After studying the various essays analysing the *Grauniad*'s shortcomings, he announced that it was all a bit too serious – but he would lighten it up by penning a brief "skit", based on an imaginary "*Guardian* Therapy Group" at the Tavistock Clinic.

Alas! Tariq's little *jeu d'esprit* turned into a 30,000-word epic revealing little about the *Guardian* but plenty about his obsession with defecation and oral sex. It begins with a woman wiping her bum with a copy of the *Grauniad*; later, when her lover performs oral sex on her, he discovers Hugo Young's column sticking out of her vagina...

Oh dear. Since Tariq Ali is a senior executive at Verso, however, the publishers were in no position to reject his lavatorial masterpiece.

*'Bookworm'*

# SOAP UPDATE

## *Feuding Novelists* (all newspapers)

JULIAN and Martin haven't spoken since they quarrelled over Pat... but now Martin wants to make up!

At least he's calling their relationship "an amorphous absence that haunts your present, your future and, most unwelcomely, your past". Julian's been telling the *Daily Telegraph* "What I think is private business, he thinks is public. But I don't thereby change my own rules."
*Eye* rating? Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z...

# GREAT CORRECTIONS OF OUR TIME (PART 94)

"In the Review's special summer reading issue of 2 July we wrongly ascribed a reading list to Roddy Doyle, the celebrated Irish author. Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding, the 'Roddy Doyle' we spoke to, and who gave us a very interesting selection of summer reading, was a computer engineer from north London."

— *Observer*, 30 July

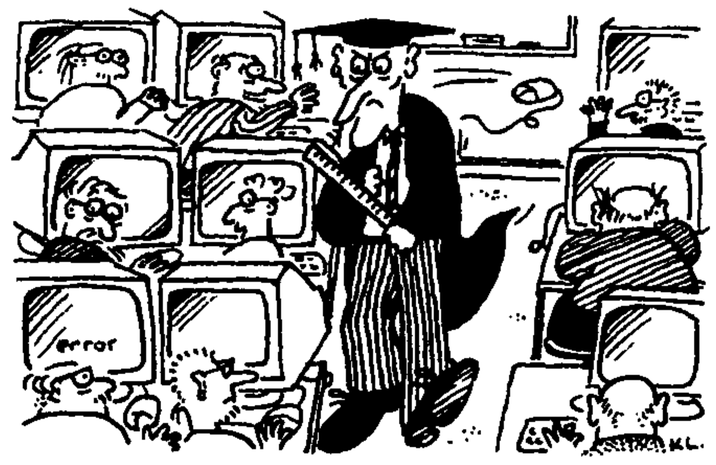
# Pseuds Corner

**Survivors of that cruel afternoon believed they would never again be happy. What happened on July 16 1950 [Brazil's defeat by Uruguay in the World Cup Final] deserves a collective monument, like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. These are the things that build nations, a people drenched in their own pain.**

**CARLOS HEITOR CONY**
**Guardian**

Our client is a leading financial services firm committed to realising growth and increased profitability across all business lines. Strong emphasis on quality and productivity is one of the key drivers toward achieving the firm's strategic objectives.

The Productivity Professional/Coach will be part of a cutting edge initiative driven by senior management in the core businesses. The firm's productivity and quality teams focus on identifying areas of opportunity for enhancing revenues, increasing capacity, increasing client satisfaction and decreasing expenses.




The Productivity/Professional Coach will be responsible for key elements in the design, implementation and on-going monitoring of the productivity and quality program. Championing the mindset, the candidate must have proven execution skills...

**Job advertisement**
**The Times**

*... like many Oasis coinages, Morning Glory transports the listener to a place where whys and wherefores have given way to the non-specific jouissance of champagne supernovas.*

**CHARLOTTE RAVEN**
**Guardian**

My Laguiole Sommelier corkscrew has a handmade juniper wood handle which smells wonderful. It's the Rolls Royce of corkscrews from a French firm that makes top hunting knives. It's old-fashioned in style – a bit like a Waiter's Friend – but it has a modern mechanism which draws the cork in one go. There's also an aubrac horn and bone handled one, which we use in the restaurant, and an aluminium one designed by Philippe Starck. I prefer the juniper for its welcoming, relaxing smell.

**HESTON BLUMENTHAL**
**London Standard**

### The 'lesbian vagina': Does it exist?

**Methods:** This paper takes on a feminist social constructionist approach to explore how the 'lesbian vagina' is constructed. It draws on data from lesbians talking in focus groups (that were mixed in terms of participants' sexuality) and in interviews about the vagina, and additionally takes data from lesbian sex books, magazines and writings. Data are analysed using a biographical and thematic approach to explore inconsistencies across and within different accounts.

**Results:** The terms in which the vagina was discussed in most focus groups were profoundly heterosexist and lesbian participants were often silenced or their contributions were ignored. Despite this, women described the vagina in a variety of different ways: the vagina as unimportant in life or identity; the vagina as a crucial element of womanhood; the vagina as sexually insignificant; and the vagina as central to sexual practices.

**Conclusions:** The 'lesbian vagina' as a unitary construct with fixed meanings clearly does not exist.

**British Psychological Society:**
**lesbian and gay psychology section**

Contributors: Tristan Hatton-Ellis, Joe Cuddihy, Edward Roberts, Jane Pearce, John Hein.

**£10 paid for entries**

# IN THE BACK

## PENSIONS: PRU TO FORM

**IT IS six years since the exposure of the great pension scandal in which billions of pounds were swindled from working people.**

Nurses, miners, firefighters and so on — many facing redundancy — were beguiled by agents on fat commissions from the big insurance companies into switching from workplace pensions into much less secure private schemes.

Government-appointed regulators, now under the financial services authority (FSA), are slowly getting to grips with the scandal. The worst cases have mostly been settled, but there are still hundreds of thousands of swindled people who have not been compensated.

The swindle was promoted in the mid-1980s by Tory social security ministers Norman Fowler, Tony Newton and John Major. While the Tories stayed in office the names of the companies most responsible for the swindles — and the extent of them — were kept secret. Then in October 1996 the *Independent* got hold of a leaked personal investments authority (PIA) list of the biggest pension offenders. At the top was the Prudential.

The Pru's former chief executive Mick Newmarch had proudly told the world that his company was responsible for "a negligible number" of mis-selling cases. *Whoops!* The PIA report recorded 41,439 priority cases of rank mis-selling — far more than for any other company. The leaked report also recorded that only 10 of those cases had been settled with compensation.

The leaks were treated with disdain by government and regulators who continued do no next to nothing to bring the swindlers to book. This changed abruptly when the Tories lost office in 1997. Labour had opposed the 1988 legislation which inspired the mass swindling, and from the outset ministers were shrill in their demand that the pension companies must settle with the workers they had swindled.

**Pru romance: Prudential's former boss Sir Peter Davis, who was put in charge of Labour's welfare to work scheme**

Leading the charge was Helen Liddell, then a treasury minister, who publicly denounced the companies and warned them that the worst offenders would be "named and shamed" by the new Labour administration. Accordingly, a series of shocking swindlers' lists were regularly released by the treasury. Many of the companies were fined by the regulator for their swindling. Sun Life of Canada was fined £600,000; Britannic Assurance and London and Manchester Assurance £525,000 each; Britannia Life, £500,000; DBS Management, £425,000; and so on. Altogether no less than £8m fines were levied on these companies just for their priority cases.

A curious absentee from the list of those fined was the biggest swindler of all: the Prudential. Though the Pru was top of the swindlers' list, it was not fined a penny. This was because the company refused to be regulated by the PIA, and the other regulators at the time were not so keen on financial penalties for swindling, however blatant. A Prudential spokeswoman told the *Eye*: "We were not regulated by the PIA. We were regulated by the SIB [securities and investments board]. That's why we weren't fined."

Another lucky coincidence for the Pru was that its chief executive Sir Peter Davis (who could be seen regularly in television ads strutting about with an umbrella over his head to demonstrate his passion for security in old age) was a favourite businessman with the new Labour government, and put in charge of its ambitious scheme to get people on welfare into work.

In January last year Helen Liddell had left the treasury. In her place was the former civil liberties campaigner and Arthur Andersen executive Patricia Hewitt. Hewitt announced that the government was ending its naming and shaming and withdrew the offending lists of names, including the Prudential. This generous gesture was made even though hundreds of thousands of smaller claims still have to be processed.

The Prudential spokeswoman told the *Eye* the company has set aside some £2bn to compensate the people swindled by the Pru whose cases have not yet been dealt with.

In the meantime the government has been preoccupied by another new deal for pensioners. Ministers are worried lest poorer people not in workplace pension schemes have to rely on the increasingly mean state pension and as a result plunge into appalling poverty in old age. One easy solution is substantially to increase the basic state pension. Another is to continue with SERPS, the earnings-related scheme introduced by Barbara Castle in the last Labour government. Both courses have been spurned by ministers as too expensive and too redolent of "old Labour". Instead the government has come up with the spanking new "stakeholder pension".

The Trades Union Congress is now trying to persuade some five million of its members to take out stakeholder pensions. To do this, in accordance with "new" Labour philosophy, the TUC will naturally need the experience and expertise of a big private pension company. The TUC engaged in a prolonged tender process to find the right company and came up with a famous old insurance company that will soon be circulating millions of TUC members with bold proposals for stakeholding. The name of the company? That's right: the Prudential.

## SEEING ORANGE

**IF THE future's Orange, it also seems pretty bleak for many parents in the picturesque Cornish seaside town of Fowey.**

Directors of the all-powerful, all-arrogant Orange corporation — one of the most powerful in Europe — decided they needed a massive mast on the Windmill industrial estate in the town, right next to the primary school.

When parents protested that the mast could damage children's health, local man John Treffry offered Orange some land he owns above the town a good distance away from schools and houses. Fraser Grant, head of infrastructure expansion at Orange Telecommunications, considered the offer and rejected it. The site near the school, apparently, was more convenient and cheaper.

Geoff Barron, of Tompkins and Barron, owner of the Windmill estate, wondered if he ought to withdraw his consent for the mast but was told by his lawyers he might be sued if he did so. Planning permission for the mast was hotly contested by Fowey residents and refused by the district council. But the company appealed and the issue was debated at a public inquiry in front of Daphne Maire, a government planning inspector.

Ms Maire adjourned the hearing to consider the findings of a report of the independent expert group on mobile phones, chaired by Sir William Stewart. In his report, published in April, Sir William concluded, among other things, that "the particular vulnerable situation of children who absorb more energy from external electromagnetic fields than adults is confirmed... The gaps in knowledge are sufficient to justify a precautionary approach... beams of the greatest radio frequency intensity should not fall on any part of the school grounds without the agreement of the school and the parents".

**Bright future? Fowey primary pupils**

Dr G.J. Hyland of Warwick University gave evidence to the hearing. His evidence was summarised as follows: "It should be noted that the apparent absence to date of life-threatening adverse effects of exposure to GSM base station radiation is no guarantee of immunity against long-term chronic exposure. Exposure to this kind of radiation is still in its early days in comparison to the very long latency period of the kind of carcinomas that could be promoted in certain people."

He concluded: "Erection of the mast cannot be responsibly permitted since it could well compromise the safety of certain individuals, particularly the children living in the area or attending the nearby primary school."

Daphne Maire considered all this very responsibly and gave permission for the mast to be erected.

## Déjà flew?

**IN ALL the debate about what happened to the crashed Concorde in France, no reference has been made to a piece on these pages 22 years ago entitled *Shitty Shitty Bang Bang*.**

The piece started with a small quotation from the *Times* of 28 September 1978, as follows: "One of Air France's four Concordes has been temporarily withdrawn from service after developing engine trouble on September 17 [1978]. It will be overhauled completely."

There followed another quotation from the French satirical paper *Le Canard Enchainé*, which reported that on a recent transatlantic flight one of Concorde's engines became overheated. "The warning equipment went wrong as well so the engine was not shut down." Indeed, it became so hot that "the part of the wing carrying the engine became deformed." The damage was so severe the plane was grounded for well over six months.

The *Eye* continued: "Almost the whole space inside Concorde's wings is occupied by fuel tanks, some of which are in close proximity to what became on that occasion a red hot engine. Even in normal operations the fuel in Concorde tanks becomes very hot, and the US Federal Aviation Administration over a long period pressed the Concorde-makers to install a system to fill the air spaces over the fuel in the tanks with inert nitrogen, to reduce the risk of explosion. This was resisted by the makers, because the weight of such a system would have reduced the plane's already pathetic payload. When their reluctance to comply became known last year, the mayor of Hempstead (adjacent to Kennedy airport) described Concorde as a 'flying bomb'."

The article started with a question. "How long will it be before Concorde explodes in mid-air?"

# THE KAMARA SCANDAL

**IT IS not every day the *Eye* gets a long letter from a lord justice. So the detailed explanation of The Rt Hon Lord Justice Kay dated 26 July was a refreshing attempt to solve what is becoming known in legal circles as the Kamara scandal.**

*Eye* readers know by now that Johnny Kamara of Liverpool was recently released by the court of appeal after serving 19 years in prison for a murder he didn't commit. The chief reason he was released was the failure at his trial to disclose to his lawyers 201 statements — many of which made nonsense of the identification evidence against him.

In a letter to Mark Fisher MP, revealed in the last *Eye*, the attorney general Lord Williams confessed that he had no idea what had happened to these statements, nor why nor how they were mislaid, nor who was responsible.

As promised the *Eye* wrote to Lord Justice Kay to see if he could help. As a young barrister in 1981, John Kay was junior counsel for the prosecution. In his long and helpful letter, the lord justice makes the following points:

"1. I was asked to deal with a request for further information made by the solicitors acting for Mr Gilbert, Mr Kamara's co-accused.

"2. I never saw why the prosecution should be the arbiter of what was relevant when it could do no-one any harm to provide the lot including that which was obviously irrelevant and let the defence make of them whatever they saw fit. I therefore advised that rather than select what was required by the rules or specifically requested by Mr Gilbert's solicitors, the lot should be made available to the defence.

"3. Although I was never made aware of any similar request by Kamara's solicitors, I nonetheless specifically advised that all the statements should be made available to his solicitors as well.

"4. For reasons which I am at a loss to understand, it now seems highly probable that someone complied in part with the instructions and omitted to make them available to Mr Kamara's solicitors. I know of no other instance where the like has happened and I could have had no reason to doubt that having asked for advice specifically on the subject and received it in the clearest possible terms, it would not be followed.

"5. Assuming, as now seems to be the case, that specific advice was ignored, I am at a loss to understand how this happened. Lord Justice Otton in his judgment recorded: 'On the material available before us, it appears the fault for that lies within the office of the DPP.'

"6. I know nothing that contradicts that view."

The way now seems clear for a ruthless inquiry by the DPP to find the reasons for such a shocking non-disclosure of documents that would have saved Johnny Kamara 19 years in prison.

# MULLING IT OVER

**THE cover-up continues of the circumstances that led to the crash on the Mull of Kintyre of a Chinook helicopter crammed with top intelligence agents from Northern Ireland, all of whom perished.**

On 13 June Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat MP for Carshalton and Wallington, asked John Spellar, minister of state for defence, if the helicopter "had a complete set of flight reference cards" – potted manuals for the crew to refer to in an emergency.

The question followed rumours that the documents about any possible malfunction in the helicopter's computerised engine control system, FADEC, were not up to scratch and that their inadequacy could have been responsible for the crash. But Spellar replied that the Chinook "had a complete set of reference cards" when it crashed, including "all the normal and emergency operating drills at that time, including drills for a possible FADEC malfunction".

Well, up to a point... At the RAF board of inquiry into the crash, Squadron Leader David Morgan, who had been flying Chinooks for 13 years and had been a qualified instructor for seven, was asked if malfunctions were covered by drills in the helicopter's flight reference cards. He replied: "No, the flight reference cards were based primarily on the Chinook D Model which is not fitted with FADEC. Drills relating to FADEC were based on the best information available on how the system would respond during certain malfunctions".

He was then asked if there were any areas where the flight reference cards on the Chinook were confusing. He replied: "Yes, a number of emergency drills, in particular electrical and hydraulic, were poorly laid out and required the crew to be familiar with the drill to avoid confusion."

The board of inquiry, which ended up blaming the pilots for the crash, conceded: "The relative inexperience of the crew could have amplified the degree of distraction caused by even a minor technical occurrence. Any distraction could have been further amplified by the poor guidance provided by the Chinook's flight reference cards."

**Were the Chinook's flight cards marked?**

At the Scottish fatal accident inquiry into the crash an officer so senior he had to be known as Witness J was much more damning about the helicopter's documentation in general and the flight reference cards in particular. "Documentation for the (Chinook) HC2 remains incomplete," he said, "though on June 2 1994 [the day of the crash] it was even less useful... Crews at that time were using partially photocopied and manually amended flight reference cards due to the shortfall in issue... The chapter dealing with FADEC is incomprehensible to aircrew operating the aircraft... The flight reference cards were re-issued in entirety in July 1994 as understanding of the aircraft systems evolved. Those in force in June 1994 [the month of the crash] were actually held to be so incorrect as to be contributory to the number of engine malfunctions being observed."

In the light of all this expert testimony, why would Mr Spellar create such a false impression by his answer to parliament? He could not have been responding, surely, to the determination of his ministry's senior civil servants at all costs to avoid a public inquiry into the Chinook crash?

# Rambo reports

**THE inspection report by Sir David "Rambo" Ramsbotham into Blantyre House prison in Kent has finally been published (see *Eyes* 1005/6). The home office had been sitting on it since March, allegedly because it wanted passages highlighting tension between the progressive jail governors and area managers to be toned down.**

Blantyre is a model jail which until recently prided itself on its resettlement programme under which 120 inmates left the jail every day or night to work or attend training or community projects. Last year prisoners only failed to return on two occasions, and the reoffending rate after two years of freedom is an amazingly low 8 percent.

But in May, when the report was already in the hands of the government, dozens of riot squad officers descended on Blantyre searching for unauthorised materials, and governor Eoin McLellan-Murray and his deputy David Newport were relieved of their duties. Only a handful of illicit possessions — mobile phones, tiny amounts of cannabis and seven items of pornography — were found and no charge has yet been made. But the investigation continues and McLellan-Murray remains on special leave.

A prison service spokesman said the raid was needed to retain public confidence in the jail, but Ramsbotham's report tells a very different story. Unsolicited praise for the running of Blantyre over the past eight years is marred only by the confusion between various authorities over the prison's resettlement provision.

While home office minister Paul Boateng, prison service director general Martin Narey and Ramsbotham himself have all said Blantyre is a resettlement prison, the area managers view it as a training prison with a resettlement function. The report also points to confusion caused by an article in *Prison Service News* which failed to include Blantyre in a list of resettlement prisons, and by Boateng's recent suggestion that Blantyre might become an under-18s prison. Since the raid and the installation of new governor Chris Bartlett, inmates' work placements in the community have been cancelled.

Ramsbotham singles out the former governor and staff for praise, with special mention for the governor's courage in implementing the resettlement programme. He highlights areas of good practice including an excellent anti-bullying strategy, a suicide awareness committee attended by the Samaritans and the high standard of educational facilities. He emphasises that all the evidence shows the old regime at Blantyre was successful in cutting rates of reoffending, advises further investment "so that the ethos and good practice has a chance of being extended to establishments in other parts of the country"; and suggests that Blantyre should be seen to be much more of a resettlement prison than it was at the time of the inspection.

The discrepancies between Ramsbotham's report and the May raid have now come to the attention of the home affairs select committee. Two days after publication on 28 July, the committee announced an inquiry into the impact of the search and ensuing criminal investigations upon Blantyre's resettlement ethos. Whether it will uphold Ramsbotham's praise of the old liberal regime or agree with the recent clampdown remains to be seen.

# Local demockery

**THE complete lack of democracy in local health authorities is a scandal the Labour party once promised to solve.**

Six years ago, when Dawn Primarolo was the party's spokeswoman on health, she pledged that in office Labour would ensure that health authorities would be elected. That way, she said, they would be more susceptible to local opinion.

But the years went by and all sorts of radical pledges by Labour spokespeople were watered down until they vanished. Ms Primarolo's promise did not appear in the manifesto. When Labour won its landslide, she became a treasury minister and is still there today.

In Grantham, meanwhile, what used to be known as Thatcher country, the attitude of citizens to the local health authority, Lincolnshire Health, has been put to the test. The removal from Grantham hospital of vital medical services for women, especially pregnant women, and children has led to a long string of complaints, injuries, indignities and even deaths. These led in turn to increasing frustration with the two leading officials at the health authority: Brenda Sills, chair, and chief executive Richard Jeavons.

Neither has been elected and neither showed much sensitivity to the rising tide of concern in Grantham and angry complaints from councillors in the elected South Kesteven district council.

In May the council's policy committee approved a referendum in Grantham and nine outlying villages. The vote was organised by the council on 22 May. The proposition was: "In view of the unsafe standards of services being provided by the local hospital for mothers and children, should the chairman and chief executive of Lincolnshire Health resign?"

The turnout was average for a full-scale council election in the area: 25 per cent. They voted: Yes, 7,518 (98.5 per cent); No, 117 (1.5 per cent).

Mrs Sills and Mr Jeavons took no notice at all, and announced their intention not to resign.

*You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017*

# In the City

GORDON BROWN's favourite economist Gavyn Davies has more reasons than most – perhaps as many as 300,000 – to be happy over the Iron Chancellor's surprise nuptials (although they were an unlikely surprise to him as Mrs Davies, aka Sue Nye, is Brown's personal assistant).

For Davies looks likely to be the fortunate beneficiary of one his friend's pioneering tax incentives introduced in the 1998 budget. It was designed to discourage City short-termism by encouraging investors to hold on to shares rather than sell for a quick turn. In that budget, Brown introduced a system of tapered capital gains tax relief which reduces the potential gains tax bill by up to 40 percent if shares are held for 10 years from 1997.

The scheme came into effect after three years, ie from last April. From that date investors save 5 percent off the tax bill with another 5 percent each successive year up to year ten. How fortunate therefore that the first date at which Davies could sell any of his shares in Wall Street investment bankers Goldman Sachs following the bank's flotation last year was last month. Goldman's chief economist put up for sale some 220,000 shares worth around £14.7 million – about a sixth of his near £90m holding.

Just how big the capital gain will be on the sale is unclear as Goldman was a partnership until last year. The cost price for the shares sold would therefore be a sixth of the amount Davies paid to become a partner. That figure deducted from the £14.7m proceeds would provide the taxable gain at 40 percent – a maximum tax bill of £5.84m if the shares were held (unlikely) to have only a nominal cost.

But that's where Gordon rides to the rescue. His taper relief scheme will allow the first 5 percent of the proceeds, around £725,000, to be exempt from tax. And that could save Gavyn up to £300,000. With more to come the next time he sells any Goldman shares.

More than enough to justify a really special wedding present to oh so generous Gordon.

THE phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed's bankers appear to be growing nervous. The £340m loan facility extended to his Harrods Holdings master company has been sharply reduced ahead of its 2002 repayment date. The facility has recently been cutback to £293m, which is a whisker above the level of the Harrods drawdown at the beginning of the year.

It seems the bankers may well be wondering how it can be repaid other than by a refinancing agreement given Fayed's lack of major saleable assets and his endless spending. Which no doubt explains why the pharaoh is indeed looking to refinance the Harrods debt mountain before the 2002 deadline.

As at end January Harrods Holdings had borrowed £285m, a £10m increase on the year before. But the loan agreement calls for "phased reductions" before the repayment date. With less than two years to go it seems the pharaoh's bankers have decided to start making the reductions themselves.

All of which may explain rumours circulating within the Fayed empire that expansion plans are on hold and properties are to be sold.

The squeeze comes at a bad time for Fayed as his Knightsbridge cash machine is no longer dispensing loot at the old ever increasing rate. The latest accounts for the parent company filed last week disclose a mere £1m rise in retail sales, more than 75 percent from the top people's store, at £511m. Harrods Holdings group profits, adjusting for the previous year's £30m bill for writing off part of the disastrous investment in Alpha Airports, were indeed down if an £8.6m "profit" had not been booked on selling the Alpha shares compared to the written down value.

But even with such creative accounting group profits before tax were £31.5m compared with £53.3m two years ago. But this was almost entirely down to the Harrods performance. Holdings itself managed to turn a £27.5m profit for 1999 into a £15.9m loss.

Not surprisingly, especially with the bankers watching, even if cash balances reduce net debt to only £240m, there is once again no dividend to pass on to the Bermuda partnership through which Fayed and his brothers own Harrods. Two years ago they were able to pay themselves £14m. Now the payout is restricted to directors' salaries, more than doubled from £608,000 to £1.6m with possibly "Momo" paying himself a mere £774,000.

Part of the problem is the extent to which Harrods picks up the tab for Fayed's endless Quixotic legal battles. For the first time the Holdings accounts contain some hard information on just how much this involves following his humiliating climbdown in the Rowland safe deposit case.

Last year to January Holdings paid out £4.2m to cover "one-off legal cases". These were set off against the retailing operations (Harrods) which suggests they could form part of the £2m-plus paid in damages and legal costs to the widow of "Tiny" Rowland whose Harrods safe deposit box was illegally entered and pillaged by Fayed and his underlings. Interestingly Harrods was not a defendant in the action brought by Josie Rowland, only Fayed and his employees. So it would be interesting to know how this could be justified as one of the "one-off legal cases" if the Rowland case is among the £4.2m.

That case was settled in March, after the Harrods year end. But there was still the question of Fayed's own legal costs, estimated at another £1m plus. For the first time, there is not only a reference to legal costs already paid but to those expected to be paid.

The latest accounts show that there is provision for a further £2.8m to be paid this year in "litigation, settlement and associated costs". This is to cover "anticipated costs required to resolve specific legal disputes brought both against and by Harrods". Such as claims for unfair dismissal. These are expected to be "resolved in the near future".

Clearly auditor PricewaterhouseCoopers has finally decided such substantial and regular sums can no longer go unreported and still present a "true and fair view" of the Harrods finances.

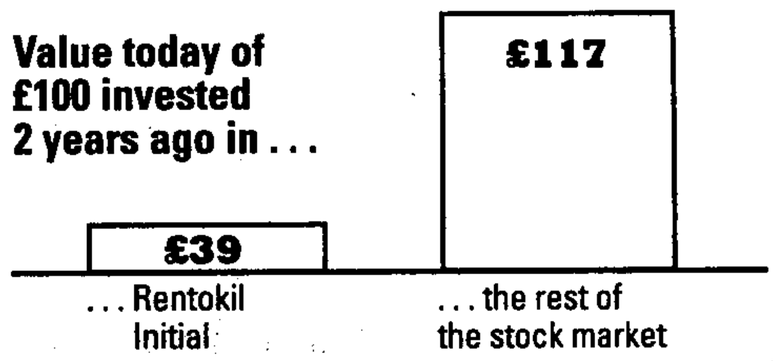
Fayed would also seem to have embarked on a programme of selling assets from his private companies into Holdings thereby no doubt improving his offshore position and making up for the missing dividend.

Holdings purchased a property from a Fayed company for £2.4m and promptly wrote off £230,000 of the price. It also acquired two helicopters from Fayair for almost £3.5m. And it has swapped some £23m for shares in HOT Online held by another Fayed offshore vehicle. HOT is an Irish company set up to develop e-commerce through a Harrods website. Harrods now owns 15 percent of HOT. Who owns the rest, other than Fayed offshore, is unclear.

What is clear is that almost £30m has gone from the Harrods tills/facility into the Fayed offshore trousers. No doubt to be recycled to fund *Punch* and Fulham FC and further litigation, such as the doomed passport bid. No wonder the banks are reducing their exposure.

## Stock Horror

## Sir Clive Thompson's Rentokil Initial down the drain




ANOTHER tycoon not unfamiliar with cash squeezes is the grinning pullover Sir Richard Branson. So it is perhaps understandable why the consumer champion's loss-making Virgin Express airline has introduced a £1 charge for mineral water or soft drinks on its cut-price flights.

How much of a dent is this likely to make in losses of £8m for the first quarter of this year, double the total for 1999? But then Branson thrives on profitless prosperity – a luxury he can afford so long as the £400m from Singapore Airlines does not run out and Virgin Atlantic, like its smaller stablemate suffering from fuel price hikes and tough competition, keeps generating spare cash.

But Singapore owning part of the Virgin Atlantic cash machine and no end to the losses elsewhere suggests the days of smoke and mirrors may be coming to an end for the bearded wonder.

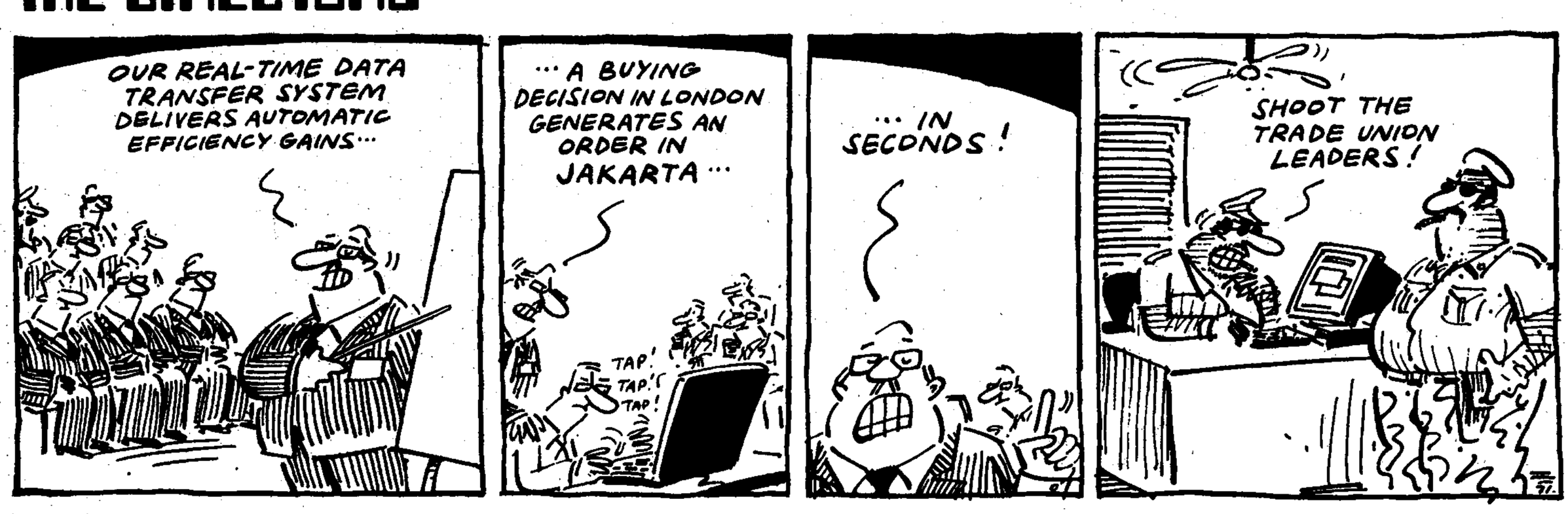
THE *Guardian*, whose self-righteousness (such as over Benji the Binman, to whom it was no stranger) knows no bounds. It assures readers it has nothing to fear from a City Slickers-style scandal or the plans of the Financial Services Authority to police journalists. Its saintly hacks must "follow a strict policy of disclosure whereby all shareholdings and other financial interests which might give rise to a conflict are noted in a register of interests". So do most other newspapers. But why are *Guardian* financial journalists allowed to buy shares *at all*?

If they are, why are they not required to disclose their holdings to the public – not just internally when writing about a company? And why should financial hacks alone have to disclose? What about editors and executives? The "Moron" scandal showed they outnumbered the Slickers and were even greedier. In the causes of openness and press probity it ceaselessly prides itself in exemplifying, perhaps the *Guardian* should make its "register of interests" open to readers – just like those other paragons of virtue, members of parliament.

***'Slicker'***

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG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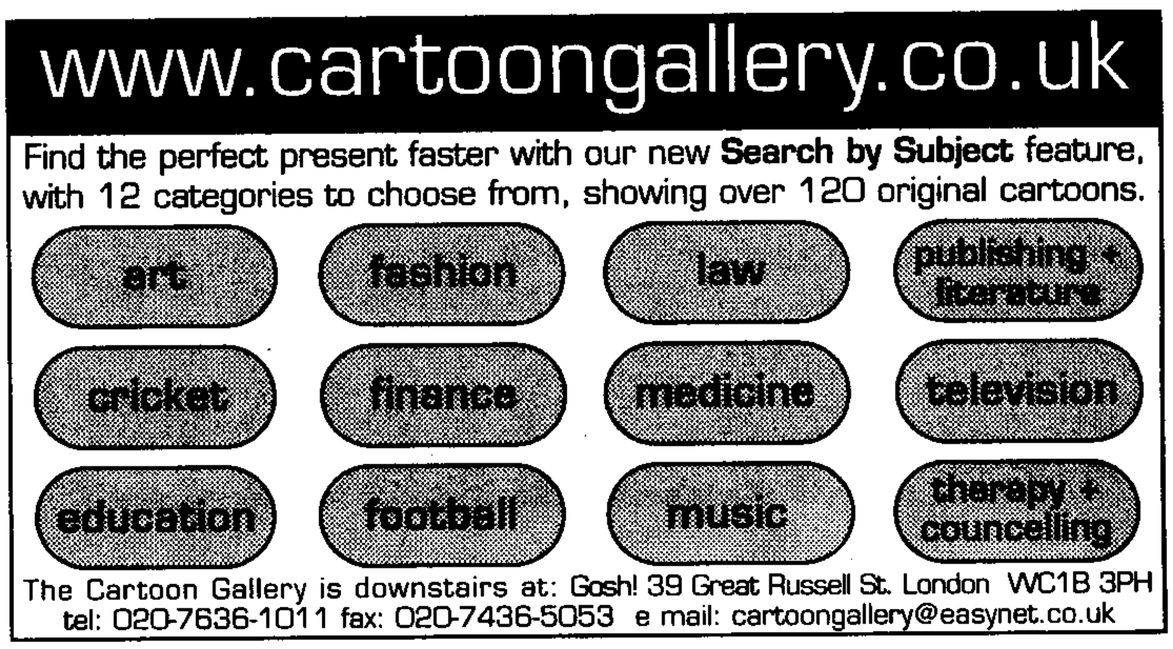

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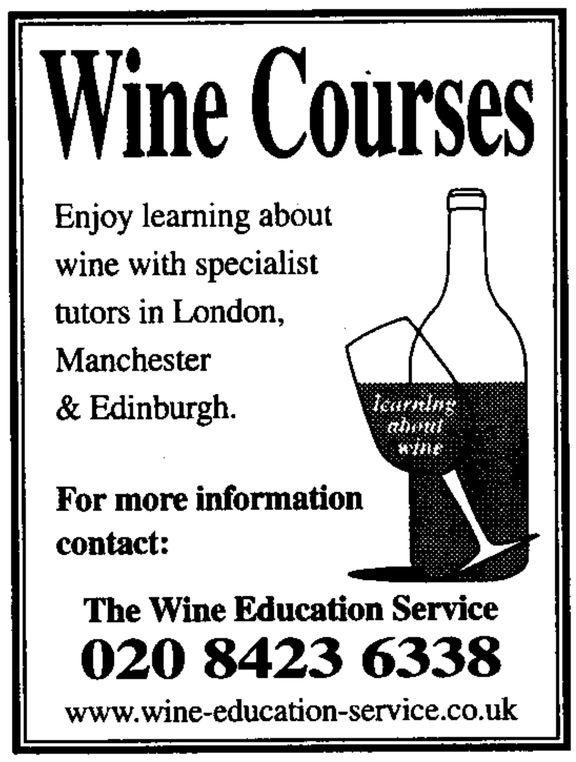
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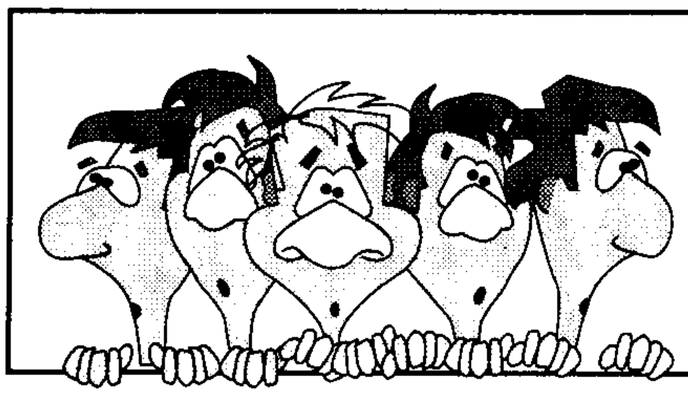

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# EYE CONTACT

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# EYE LOVE

**HANDSOME BOY,** 39 – slim, 2 ears, good grin – seeks sexy girl for long-term love and nakedness with and without laughing. Cambs/Essex – anywhere. Box 1208.

**ATTRACTIVE, SASSY** female boat owner, fabulous location (Fowey) seeks 50-60ish male angler/mariner graduate (o.n.o.!). Essential unattached, un-broke, relaxed, N.S. tall, tender, retired/semi-retired with manageable baggage/time for summer magic. Box 0808.

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**HANDSOME IRISHMAN,** tall, dark, down to earth rocket scientist, 28, gentle, caring, seeks attractive intelligent single woman for non STR, Nottingham area – terra_10@hotmail.com or Box 0308.

**IMPERFECT** and with history... but thoughtful, gentle and sometimes intelligent (given the gender – male). Creative and articulate – I'm told. Oh, and I'm, 38 – divorced... Would like to meet a woman interested in ideas and creating a future together. Central London. Do reply. Photo appreciated. Box 0608.

**SINGLE MALE, 43,** London based, attentive – WLTM sensual, attractive well dressed lady 35-60. Tel 0956 283902 or Box 1108.

**BUSINESSMAN** and single dad seeks presentable, outgoing sexy lady, 25-32 for exiting LTR. London/Surrey. Box 0908.

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**TALL, CULTURED,** successful and very generous man, 40, Bath/South West, seeks a younger woman to spoil and pamper and to enjoy the summer with. I live life to the full – film, theatre, travel, eating out and eating in, laughter and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with a man who really enjoys himself then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 2805.

**SEEKING ROMANCE?** Spirited, cosmopolitan, and professional N/S male, 39, WLTM that special attractive lady with GSOH for long-term wining, dining, culture and fun. Box 1907.

**TALL, SLIM,** handsome, professional guy, early 40s, eclectic tastes, likes outdoors, travel, movies, books etc. – seeking bright, pref younger female for relationship. You? Box 1908.

**HANDSOME YOUNG** man, 25, Winchester, wants to start something silly with a sleek and shiny middle aged woman. Long legs an advantage. Box 0708.

**SAD FEMALE** creative (52) seeks comic chap for laughter therapy. Stratford-upon-Avon. Box 0508.

**VERY ATTRACTIVE** graduate professional woman, warm, vibrant and cultured, seeks tall, interesting and dynamic man, late 30-40s, for relationship. London. Photo and letter please. Box 0408.

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**VIVACIOUS,** curvaceous, London widow seeks N/S honest unattached solvent male 55-65 for good times and possible long term relationship. Box 2208.

**A HETAERA** was, apparently, a highly-educated courtesan in ancient Greece who could also occasionally be a slave. I need one. Ideally neither Ancient nor Greek. Box 1408.

**BLACK MALE,** lawyer/musician, 50, 6' tall, in loveless relationship seeks female for discreet relationship – could be permanent. Box 2108.

**ARE YOU A WOMAN** 23-29 looking for a relationship? I am 30-year-old company dictator based inthe Midlands who is looking for a meaningful relationship. If you have a restless nature and like to go a bit mad, send your details to Box 1808 or email woman@streetmonkey.co.uk

**HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE,** wealthy, professional man, 52, celibate marriage, seeks discreet sophisticated relationship – no ties – with beautiful woman 35-45. Fun and absolute discretion guaranteed. Box 2008.

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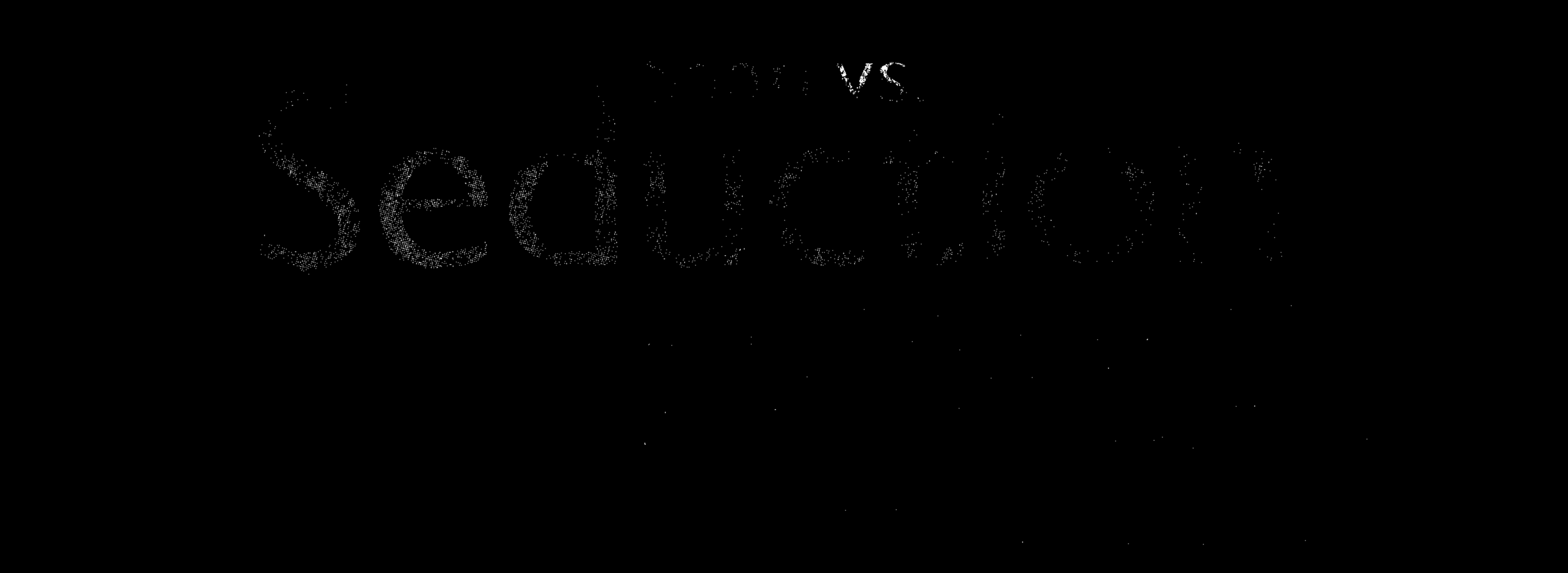

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